

Syria may refer water dispute to U.N.

CAIRO (AP) — Syria warned it may take a dispute with Turkey over the Euphrates River to the U.N. Security Council, worsening tensions with its powerful northern neighbour. Abdul Qader Qaddoura, the parliament speaker, promised that Syria would not back down in an increasingly bitter dispute. "We don't want any more than we are entitled to, but we will not allow anyone to deny us any bit of our rights," he said in an interview Friday with the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat. The Euphrates, which is vital to the Syrian economy, is part of an ambitious Turkish development project to build dams across the river and irrigate vast swaths of southeastern Turkey. Syria fears the project will substantially reduce the river's flow. Asked to comment on the tension, Mr. Qaddoura said Turkey was trying to divert attention from its internal problems. "We don't interfere in the affairs of others and we do not allow anyone to interfere in our affairs," he said. Earlier this year, Turkey accused Syria of supporting Kurdish separatists fighting in eastern Turkey.

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Pope praises Jordan for peace role

VATICAN CITY (APF) — Pope John Paul II praised King Hussein Thursday for promoting dialogue in the Middle East, and urged the international community to do more to establish lasting peace in the region. Speaking as he welcomed Jordan's new ambassador to the Vatican, Sherif Fawaz Sharif, the pontiff said the King and Jordanian government had been "courageous" in their efforts to promote peace. The Middle East was now "at a crossroads," he added, and needed to pass from a "peace agreed by accords to a real and effective peace between peoples." He urged countries in the region "to work even more, with the international community, to implement the peace plan ... and specific talks on the important and delicate question of the status of Jerusalem."

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Jordan celebrates golden jubilee of independence

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan today celebrates the 50th anniversary of its independence from Britain. The Kingdom achieved its independence on May 25, 1946, when the Emirate of Trans-Jordan was transformed into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the late King Abdullah, grandfather of His Majesty King Hussein, was proclaimed king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

On May 25, 1923 Britain officially recognised the emirate of Trans-Jordan which was established in April 1921 following the arrival of the late Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein at the head of a Great Arab Revolt force to Ma'an en route to Syria which was occupied by the French. The British government then agreed with Prince Abdullah to establish the Emirate of Trans-Jordan and the first Jordanian government, headed by Rasheed Tulei, was formed with only one Jordanian and one Palestinian as ministers, while all the other ministers, including the prime minister, were non-Jordanian Arabs.

Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese, Hijazi and Iraqi nationals participated in the 18 Jordanian governments of Trans-Jordan. Most of the members of the respective Jordanian governments were leading members of the Istiklal Al Arabi party who left Syria following the French occupation of Syria and Lebanon, and reformed their party in Jordan.

Three of the prime ministers of the 18 governments were of Palestinian origin, three of Syrian origin, one of Hijazi origin and one of a

Lebanese origin. The number of those who held ministerial portfolios in the various governments was 48, including 18 of Jordanian origin, 13 of Palestinian origin, 8 of Syrian origin, 4 of Hijazi origin, two of Lebanese origin and two of British origin.

On Feb. 20, 1928 the British and Jordanian governments signed the first Jordanian-British treaty, and in April 1929 the first legislative council endorsed the Jordanian-British treaty. In 1934 the treaty was amended for the first time, and it was amended again in 1939. Under the amendment, Prince Abdullah was designated the supreme commander of the armed forces.

Modern Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein, has strongly adhered to the principles and goals of the Great Arab Revolt launched by the late Sharif Hussein Ben Ali.

Independence Day this year comes at a time when Jordan has made great achievements covering all spheres of life. Jordan has become a regional model for democracy, public freedoms, political pluralism, respect for human rights and democratic dialogue.

It also comes after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, which enabled Jordan to regain its sovereignty rights to land and water, and put an end to decades of hostility, enmity and wars that have exhausted its resources and capacities and stood in the way of achieving its aspirations in comprehensive socio-economic development.

At the national scene Jordan has achieved remarkable

progress in all fields, despite its limited financial resources. In the education sphere, enrollment rates have jumped to over 95 per cent compared with 47 per cent in 1960. The number of students in Jordanian schools and universities totals 1.2 million, including 60,000 students attending Jordanian universities.

Health services covered almost all cities, villages and towns and there is now a doctor for each 767 people.

Water and sanitation available to only 10 per cent of the population in 1950, now reach 99 per cent of the population. Electricity also reaches 99 per cent of the total population, while it was reaching less than 10 per cent in 1955. The per capita income has also risen to \$1,400 per annum.

At the pan-Arab level, Jordan has made and is making every possible effort to achieve Arab unity and Arab solidarity. It has also advocated in-house Arab solutions to Arab differences and disputes.

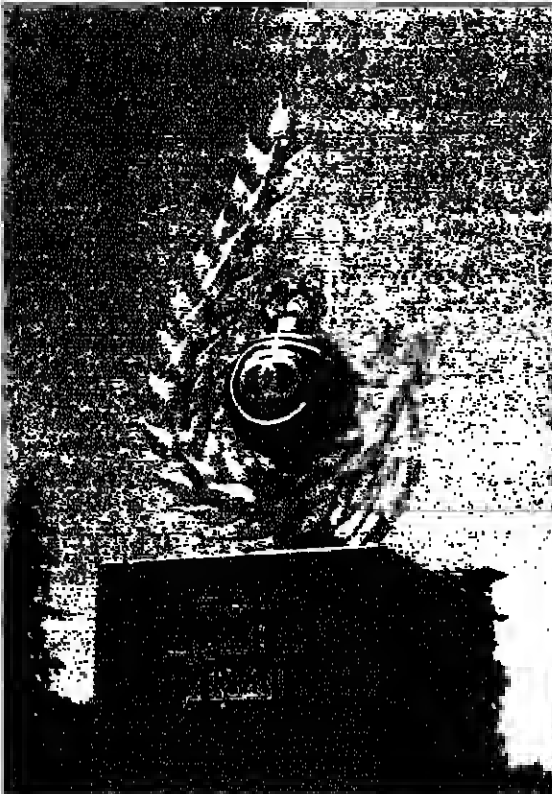
Jordan has also supported the Arab parties involved in the Middle East peace process to establish a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

At the Palestinian level, the Palestine question has remained Jordan's major preoccupation. Jordan has supported the independent Palestinian decision and the Palestinian people, through their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), in efforts to regain their rights and establish their own state on their national soil. Jordan participated

actively in all Arab summits to support the Palestine cause. Most recently Jordan participated in a tripartite summit, which brought together King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Cairo on May 12 in a show of genuine support to the PLO in its final status negotiations with Israel. Jordan will also host a mini-summit in Amman during the first week of June to be attended by King Hussein, President Mubarak and President Arafat to give more support to the Palestinians in their final status negotiations, which will cover such issues as refugees, settlements and security and borders.

On the occasion of Independence Day King Hussein received congratulatory cables from foreign, Arab and Islamic heads of state, including King Hassan II of Morocco, Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al Basbir, Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, Algerian President Lamine Zerroual, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah of Kuwait, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Emperor Akihito of Japan, Sultan Hassan Al Boulikh of Brunei Dar Es-Salam, Queen Elizabeth of Britain, Queen Beatrix of Holland, the King

(Continued on page 7)



As Jordan marks its 50th Independence Day, various activities are being organised around the Kingdom on the occasion. Photo on left shows a specially-designed structure that has been unveiled in front of the Prime Ministry to mark the occasion



50 years on -- from fledging entity to a modern kingdom

By Mabmond Mnifi
Special to the Jordan Times

"I DO KNOW that there is no greater necessity for men who 'live in communities' than that they be governed, self-governed if possible,

well-governed if they are fortunate, but in any event, governed," remarked social scientist Walter Lippman (New York Herald Tribune, Dec.10, 1963, p.24). Mr. Lippman drew this conclusion disparagingly while con-

templating the general state of affairs in the United States. However, political scientist Samuel Huntington believes that such a conclusion applies "in far greater measure to the modernising countries of Asia, Africa,

and Latin America, where the political community is fragmented against itself and where political institutions have little power, less majesty, and no resiliency --

(Continued on page 7)

King visits London JIB

LONDON (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein visited on Friday the Jordan Information Bureau (JIB) where he was briefed on the bureau's plans and projects. The King stressed that "this kind of bureau maintains strong ties with journalists and scientific research centres." Accompanying the King were Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and the Jordanian ambassador to Britain.

Rabbani, Hekmatyar sign accord

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and former Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Friday signed an agreement to jointly defend the country, Radio Kabul said. The meeting was their second since the two former foes met in the eastern town of Mahipar on Monday. The signing ceremony, held near Kabul, was attended by Mr. Rabbani's strongman, Ahmad Shah Massoud, and his political ally, Rasul Sayyaf, the broadcast said. The accord was concluded after a series of negotiations between the two parties, the radio said adding that the process of intra-Afghan dialogue initiated by the government would continue. More Afghan factions are expected to join the government efforts to restore peace in the country, it said.

Arafat to visit Oman today

GAZA (R) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will visit Oman on Saturday for talks with Sultan Qaboos Ben Sa'id on bilateral relations, an aide to the Palestinian leader said on Friday. The aide, Nabil Abu Ruainah, said the visit was part of Mr. Arafat's continuing efforts to consult Arab leaders on the Palestinian cause. Mr. Arafat visited Oman and other Gulf states last year. Oman and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have agreed to set up representative offices in Gaza and Muscat. The aide said Mr. Arafat would return to Gaza on Sunday.

Iraq accepted oil deal upon 'assurances' that sanctions will be lifted

Baghdad official says France, China and Russia extended 'gentlemen's agreement'

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq accepted the U.N. oil-for-food deal in exchange for a promise by France and Russia that they would work for a complete lifting of economic sanctions against Baghdad, an Iraqi official said Friday. "France, Russia, Egypt and other countries gave us unwritten guarantees, a kind of gentlemen's agreement, to work for the lifting of economic sanctions, notably the oil embargo, at the conclusion of this agreement with the U.N.," the official, who requested anonymity, told AFP.

He added that Iraq had refused U.N. Resolution 986, allowing the sale of a limited amount of oil for humanitarian needs, when it was adopted in April 1995 because it was seen as "an attempt to take us back to the beginning" of the sanctions. "What we hoped for was a lifting of the oil embargo, conforming to paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, since we had fulfilled our commitments in the area of disarmament," the official said.

"But France, Russia and other friendly countries told us over the past few months that they did not intend to confront the United States and Britain over this subject," he added. "They advised us to cut the legs out from under the United States and Britain by opening negotiations on Resolution 986," the Iraqi official said.

The U.S. and Britain have

(Continued on page 7)

Hamas founder said poised to urge end to anti-Israeli attacks

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — The founder of the militant Hamas movement is set to use his influence to prevent Palestinian violence from disrupting next week's Israeli election, Hamas sources said Friday.

A wave of Hamas suicide bombings in February and March wiped most of the lead dovish Prime Minister Shimon Peres enjoyed over his rival, hardline Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who sees Mr. Peres as the natural partner in the peace process, has appealed to Hamas to refrain from violence before the elections.

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the movement's spiritual leader and its founder, met in his cell on Wednesday with two fellow founders, Sheikh Sayed Abu Musaneh and Sheikh Mohammad Shamaa. The men later said that the meeting covered routine

issues, including ongoing negotiations with Mr. Arafat to suspend violence in exchange for a greater political voice in Palestinian affairs. They denied reports that Sheikh Yassin had agreed to make a dramatic appeal to followers prior to the May 29 elections in Israel to refrain from violence.

But on Friday, a Hamas source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Sheikh Yassin was planning such an appeal through the media.

In the past, he has agreed to be interviewed on Israeli Television to appeal to followers to reveal the whereabouts of the remains of slain Israeli troops.

The source said Sheikh Yassin planned to contact Hamas leaders outside West Bank and Gaza and appeal to them to stop backing the violent attacks.

The recent wave of Hamas

bombings — seemingly aimed at undermining Mr. Peres and the peace process, which Hamas opposes — prompted Israel to impose an airtight blockade of the Palestinian-ruled areas.

The resulting economic distress has seen a sharp drop in Palestinian support for the Hamas, from around 30 per cent to 10 per cent.

That has spurred local Hamas leaders to negotiate with Mr. Arafat to end the violence in exchange for a greater voice in Palestinian affairs. But Hamas leaders overseas oppose the peace process because it implies recognition of Israel, and have continued to back violence.

Palestinians began turning away from the Hamas — which once enjoyed over 40 per cent of their support — last year, when Mr. Arafat's

(Continued on page 3)

France decries killing of Trappist monks in Algeria, urges reason

PARIS (Agencies) — France condemned on Friday the apparent murder of seven French monks by Algerian guerrillas and urged a return in the country torn by three years of civil violence.

Muslims and Jews at Notre-Dame Cathedral to keep alive hopes the monks would be freed unharmed.

"This is a ghastly event. It is a sign of violent and intolerant terrorism, which is aimed at people who simply dedicate their lives to prayer and to others," Defence Minister Charles Millon said in a radio interview.

"The candles represented the hope for their lives. I wanted them to burn forever," Mr. Lustiger said after a statement in the name of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA) sent to Radio Mediterranee International in Morocco said the monks, aged 50 to 82, had been killed on Tuesday.

Both Christian and Muslim clerics said they were horrified by the guerrillas' claim to have slit the throats of the seven Trappist monks kidnapped two months ago in Algeria.

The French foreign ministry said experts were trying to establish whether the document was genuine. Intelligence sources said it contained authenticating details of a cassette the GIA had secretly sent to the French embassy in Algiers.

"I want to say today how much I hope that spirits will return to reason and that each of us understand that the path to salvation is not found through intolerance or fundamentalism," Mr. Millon told RMC radio.

Paris Archbishop Kean-Marie Lustiger slowly blew out seven candles on Thursday night that had been lit last month by Christians.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the ministry said the claim, if true, "confirms once again the extreme danger faced by isolated persons in Algeria."

The French government solemnly urges all such people, including members of

(Continued on page 7)

Talks adjourned on monitoring of Lebanon ceasefire

WASHINGTON (R) — Middle East and Western diplomats, unable to agree after two weeks of talks on ground rules for a group to monitor the ceasefire in Lebanon, adjourned their meetings on Thursday until next week.

Although some delegates said the five-nation talks would resume next Tuesday, diplomats queried whether an accord could be reached before Israel's elections next Wednesday.

Dennis Ross, the U.S. special Middle East coordinator, met for just over two hours on Thursday with the ambassadors to Washington of Israel, Syria, Lebanon and France. It was their seventh meeting since May 10.

"We are close to agreement on a text, pending some final responses," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said. "Because of American and Israeli holidays over the next few days, we will resume discussions next week in order to conclude the agreement."

The envoys said there were still two points unresolved in a draft accord setting up a committee to check compliance with the U.S.-brokered April 27 ceasefire between Israel and Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

"We are disappointed, because we were very close to

(Continued on page 3)

Upon the Occasion of
INDEPENDENCE DAY



ARAB BANK

takes pleasure in conveying to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

and to the

PEOPLE OF JORDAN

Its most cordial wishes and greetings

(Continued on page 7)

Britain urges Israel to not bar option of Palestinian state

LONDON (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind urged Israel on Thursday not to eliminate the option of a Palestinian state, and stressed that any lasting settlement cannot be imposed on the Palestinians.

"To close off the option of a state would in my view be a mistake of the first magnitude," Mr. Rifkind said in a speech in London to a charity called medical aid for Palestinians.

He added that if any peace settlement was to succeed, "it must be freely entered into by the Palestinians, not imposed on them," and "will need to respect basic Palestinian rights, not least the right to self-determination."

But the foreign secretary insisted that if the Palestinians wanted a land to govern as their own, they would have to convince the Israelis that they "accept the responsibilities that that would entail."

President Yasser Arafat "has shown, by his efforts to curb terrorism, his willingness to accept responsibility," Mr. Rifkind added.

Negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories once the interim period of autonomy ends in May 1999 began three

weeks ago in the Egyptian town of Taba.

Rifkind said that the final status talks would have to address a number of other critical areas.

These were the fair division of water resources, the question of Israeli settlements regarded by Britain as "illegal," and the future of Palestinian refugees.

Mr. Rifkind expressed hope that the thorny issue of the future of Jerusalem "will not prove the final obstacle to peace."

Chief Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas declared at the opening of the talks in Taba that his side's goal was an independent state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital.

But Israel, insists the holy city will remain its eternal and undivided capital.

The foreign secretary, however, said that until the talks are over, Britain's position, like that of the international community, "remains that Israel is in military occupation of East Jerusalem and has only de facto authority over West Jerusalem."

He called upon the Israeli government to rebuild confidence by easing restrictions on the movement of Palestinians between the occupied territories and

Israel and, in particular, "into and out of East Jerusalem."

Turning to Israel's relations with her Arab neighbours, Mr. Rifkind said there should be a "speedy resumption of talks" between Israel and Syria, to negotiate a return of the Golan Heights to Damascus in return for a "firm guarantee" of peace between the two arch-enemies.

A settlement with Syria would clear the way for peace with Lebanon. To achieve this, Israel would have to agree to leave southern Lebanon in return for an end to the rocket attacks of Hizbollah into Israel.

Rifkind was at pains to stress Britain's neutrality: "We are fighting no one's corner. We are proud to call ourselves friends of all the people of the region," he said.

He said that Britain, with its "long and deep involvement in the Middle East," was well-placed to assist the Middle East peace process by pursuing contacts with all sides.

Mr. Rifkind pledged to support the development of democracy in Palestine and provide more aid for the Palestinian National Authority.

Court closes file on Junblatt murder

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Lebanese magistrate on Thursday closed the file on the 1977 assassination of Druze Muslim leader Kamal Junblatt and the revenge killings that followed the murder, the state national news agency ANI said.

Judicial sources said the decision by Magistrate Hassan Kawass was final and without appeal, noting that under Lebanese laws court proceedings are automatically terminated 10 years after a court's failure to issue a verdict.

Mr. Kawass said in a statement published by ANI he was closing the file "because the investigation failed to reveal the identity of the killers and their accomplices in the murder of Kamal Junblatt" and two companions.

He also dropped the case because the investigation failed to identify those who went on the rampage after Junblatt's murder, killing around 150 Christians and causing massive material damage.

Mr. Kawass also revoked arrest warrants issued in absentia against 79 people after the assassination of Junblatt.

Junblatt, a key figure of Lebanese politics, was killed March 16, 1977, two years after the start of the 1975-1990 civil war, by gunmen near a Syrian army checkpoint in the Shuf mountains, a Druze stronghold southeast of Beirut.

A deputy and former cabinet minister, he headed at the time of his killing the Lebanese National Movement — a coalition of 15 leftist Lebanese and Palestinian factions — and leader of the Druze Progressive Socialist Party.



An Israeli policeman keeps watch over religious Jews walking through the Arab Quarter of the Old City from morning prayers at the Wailing Wall on Friday. Some 20,000 police and soldiers will provide security for this week's elections under the threat of attacks by militants (Reuters photo)

Peres takes his reelection campaign to heart of Israel's reputed nuclear arsenal

DIMONA (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres took his reelection campaign to the heart of Israel's suspected nuclear arsenal, which he helped create, portraying it as a security blanket for his peace moves with the country's Arab neighbours.

"Dimona has given Israel its security and the Oslo accords with the Palestinians give us peace," he told a campaign rally here last week, referring to the not-so-secret nuclear arms capability developed at dimona and the peace agreements signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"Dimona and Oslo are the formula for dissuading our enemies and turning them into partners," Mr. Peres, 72, said to an enthusiastic crowd waving banners bearing the Labour Party campaign slogan: "Israel is

strong with Mr. Peres."

In the early 1960s, when Mr. Peres worked as director general of the defence ministry, he was the driving force behind the creation of the Dimona nuclear reactor center, where the Jewish state developed its still unacknowledged nuclear arsenal.

Today, Dimona symbolises the message Mr. Peres wants to get across to voters in his battle for prime minister against Benjamin Netanyahu, the 47-year-old leader of the conservative Likud Party: prosperity and well-being depends on peace and to reach that goal Israel needs a tested captain at the helm.

Opinion polls have steadily shown peres with a four-to-seven-point lead over Mr. Netanyahu in the race for prime minister.

But the key to victory lies

with undecided voters and Mr. Peres has spared no energy crisscrossing the country by helicopter and car to reach them.

He received a warm welcome from the recent immigrants who gathered for a campaign rally on a blisteringly hot day under the desert sun.

"The economic situation was very difficult when I arrived in Israel six years ago, but things have gotten better since," said Nina Vergunov, a Ukrainian-born Jew who now runs a workshop making semiconductor chips.

"Today the most important thing is that there is no war," she said.

At the local social club, Mr. Peres received a standing ovation from about 300 immigrants, most of them elderly pensioners who clearly had no problem

with the prime minister's advancing age.

"He looks even better than on television," gushed one woman, tears in her eyes, as she tried to get the politician's signature.

Sprinkling his remarks with a besitant Russian began learning as soon as the flood of immigrants began arriving from the former Soviet union in 1989, Mr. Peres knew how to hit the mark.

"I don't want the Palestinian territories to become another Chechnya, but that's what will happen if the right returns to power," he tells the group.

"It's the peace process which has opened new markets for Israeli products and brought billions of dollars worth of foreign investments into the country," he said.

Lebanon extradites La Belle blast suspect to Germany

BERLIN (AP) — A decade after two U.S. Servicemen and a Turkish woman died in a Berlin discotheque bomb blast, a Palestinian extradited by Lebanon arrived here Thursday to stand trial.

Yasser Mohammad Chreidi, 37, is suspected by German investigators of being the mastermind behind the bomb that ripped through the La Belle discotheque on April 5, 1986.

Flanked by Lebanese and German police, Chreidi arrived at Berlin's Schoenefeld Airport aboard a Middle East Airlines jetliner.

Ruediger Reiff, a spokesman for Berlin justice authorities, said Mr. Chreidi and others are believed to have decided in the spring of 1986 to kill Americans and settled on the discotheque because it was a hangout for GLS.

In addition to the three deaths, 230 people were wounded in the bombing. According to Mr. Reiff, the secret service of communist East Germany knew of plans to attack the discotheque.

Mr. Chreidi is a suspected activist of the Fateh revolutionary council, which is headed by Abu Nidal, a Palestinian who gained notoriety in the 1970s and 1980s for some of the world's most violent attacks.

The Berlin bombing prompted then-U.S. President Ronald Reagan to order air strikes on Libya, Abu Nidal's haven and bankroller at the time.

Mr. Chreidi, a former butcher from the town of Ain Al Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in Sidon, Lebanon, had worked as a driver at the Libyan diplomatic mission in communist East Berlin. He returned to Lebanon in 1989.

Germany had sought Mr. Chreidi's extradition for three years.

Last week, the Lebanese Prosecutor-General Adnan Addoum's recommendation that Mr. Chreidi be sent to Germany despite the absence of a bilateral extradition treaty.

Judicial sources in Beirut said the decision was made after the German government pledged

not to send Mr. Chreidi to a third country, such as the United States or Turkey, if he is acquitted of the bombing charge.

A team of five security men and two officials from the German justice ministry flew to Lebanon Tuesday to take custody of Mr. Chreidi, who was serving an 18-month prison term there for using a forged passport.

On Thursday, he was escorted by Lebanese police officers and the German team from his prison in Roumieh, an eastern suburb of Beirut, for the flight to Berlin.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri Al-Banna, split from the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1973. He has since been blamed for the deaths of more than 1,000 people in attacks around the world and tops the wanted lists in several Western countries.

His whereabouts are not known.

Settlers back Netanyahu but their dream slips

ELON MOREH (AFP) — Perched on a hilltop overlooking the autonomous Palestinian city of Nablus, the 240 Jewish families in the Elon Moreh settlement see their dream of a "greater Israel" hanging on the outcome of this week's Israeli elections.

Like many of the other Jews scattered in some 140 settlements across the West Bank, Elon Moreh's inhabitants fear that if reelected on Wednesday, Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres will seal their doom by handing the rest of the occupied territories to the Palestinians as part of a permanent peace deal to be negotiated by May 1999.

In contrast, Benjamin Netanyahu of the right-

wing Likud Party is seen as the savior who will freeze, if not reverse, the Palestinian autonomy process and pour investment into the Jewish settlement movement.

The two men are the sole candidates in Israel's first direct election of the prime minister.

"Whatever our ties with the various conservative political parties, we all back the Likud leader for prime minister," said Yoel Neumann, 30, the treasurer at Elon Moreh.

Neumann, an observant Jew and father of five, acknowledges that Netanyahu's two divorces and public admissions of marital infidelity "pose some real moral problems."

"But we have to get Peres out of office because the land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel as written in the Torah," he said.

The Likud campaign platform clearly proclaims Israelis' "right to settle anywhere in greater Israel" and Mr. Netanyahu has pledged to expand settlements across the territories using both government funds and incentives to private investment.

But he has avoided providing details.

At a meeting last week he suggested that a Likud government would use funds currently transferred to the Palestinian National Authority for settlement expansion — a legally dubious proposal since the

money in question represents reimbursement of taxes and customs duties owed to the Palestinians.

The funds involved in any such transfer amount to about \$300 million per year, only marginally higher than the \$250 million spent by the labor government on settlement infrastructure during its four years in power.

When Labour came to office it announced a freeze on new housing construction in the settlements, and Elon Moreh residents are quick

to complain about the impact on their lives.

"Government funds are scarce and unemployment is mounting, we have no future," Laments Yossi

Mendel, a 46-year-old garage owner.

"At least 30 people left here last year because they couldn't obtain permanent housing," he said.

But figures released this week by the settlers council itself showed that the number of settlers rose 40 per cent during the four years of Labour government despite the official freeze on construction.

Arnon Domb, a spokesman for the council, said the total number of settlers living on the west bank and Gaza Strip now stood at 146,200, versus 105,300 when Labour came to power.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Pamkin Patch
15:30 Circus of the Stars
17:00 Ordy
17:15 La Vie Devant Moi
17:30 L'Adventure Des Plantes
18:00 Serie — Chateau Valon
19:00 Lc Journal
19:15 Magazine — Paul Pas Rever
19:35 Facts About Jordan
20:15 Good Vibrations
21:00 Alla Troupe in Folkloric Dances
21:35 Prison
22:00 News in English
22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
23:15 Feature film: "Country"

PRAYER TIMES

03:57 Fajr
05:29 (Sunrise) Duha
12:52 Dhuhr
16:13 'Asr
19:36 Maghreb
21:06 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swidieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.

775261

St. Epiphane Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625276

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824325

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Lutheran Day School Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with temperatures above average and winds north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 18 / 32
Aqaba 25 / 39
Deserts 15 / 35
Jordan Valley 24 / 38

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 32, Aqaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 671201
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 943402

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Osama Al Hussaini 847289
Dr. Nidal Al As'ad 751872
Dr. Issam Al Ammar 805044
Dr. Khalid Al Khatib 816715
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asana pharmacy 670555
Nawroth pharmacy 623072
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmoukhi pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qana 261484
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 598601
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 671201
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 943402

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Ann 644281/6
Akil Maternity, J. Ann 644241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mithas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmoukhi 607071

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Oront Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Im Al Nafas Hospital (02)247100

AMMAN:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

16:00 Damascus (RJ)
16:30 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
16:50 New Delhi (RJ)
16:50 Hayfa, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
17:05 Beirut (RJ)
17:20 Colombo (RJ)
17:35 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
18:15 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:15 London, Berlin (RJ)
18:40 Vienna (RJ)
18:50 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

03:00 Rome (AZ)
13:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
19:00 Damascus, Dubai (EK)
19:35 Amsterdam (KL)
20:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:25 Beirut (RJ)
07:30 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
12:30 Vienna (RJ)
12:50 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
14:05 Paris (RJ)
14:20 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
15:30 Madrid, Casablanca (RJ)
21:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:10 Larnaca (RJ)
21:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:25 Jeddah (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:00 Athens (QA)
04:00 Rome (AZ)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
14:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
16:00 Vienna (OS)
20:45 Dubai (EK)
23:05 Kuwait (KL)
23:50 Cairo (MS)
23:55 Larnaca (CY)
23:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)

ROYAL WINGS (RW) Flights (Marka Airport)

06:30 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
10:00 Aqaba (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAA) (RW)
23:00 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upplower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 600/500
Banana (Mukammal) 520/520
Banana (imported) 800/500
Cabbage 100 / 60
Carrot 230/140
Cauliflower 170/100
Cucumbers (small) 140/50
Cucumbers (large) 220 / 140
Eggplant 220 / 140
Fava beans 320/220
Garlic 350/150
Garlic (green) 580/400
Lemon 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 270 / 200
Marrow (small) 280/180
Onion (dry) 120/50
Orange 400/200
Peaches 210/140
Pepper (hot) 240 / 160
Pepper (sweet) 260/160
Potato 180/100
String Beans 400 / 250
Tomato 800/500

Queen urges UWC graduates to promote prospects of global village concept

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Armand Hammer United World College (AHUWC) in the U.S. state of New Mexico celebrated its 12th graduating class with a commencement speech by Her Majesty Queen Noor, the President of the United World Colleges (UWC), a Royal Court statement said Thursday.

"By coming to New Mexico from Jordan to address our graduates, Queen Noor is demonstrating the level of energy and commitment necessary to build bridges between the world's many cultures," said Philip Geier, President of AHUWC.

He added that "the Queen knows the challenges of seeking peace in a fragmented world; we have much to learn from her."

Dr. Geier, who conferred upon the Queen "the Volunteer of the Year Award" for her "lifelong commitment to volunteerism and service to others," announced the establishment of a \$100,000 scholarship, in honour of Queen Noor, for Middle East students.

The AHUWC already offers a full scholarship to Jordanian students in addition to the 5 scholarships from the UWCs in Norway, Canada, Italy, Wales and Hong Kong.

According to the statement, in a letter to the graduating class, President Bill Clinton praised the UWCs which are "building a network of global citizens who will guide our world in the 21st century" adding that he was "confident, that, under the new leadership of Queen Noor and President Mandela, the United World Colleges movement holds great promise for the future."

Describing change as "the cumulative consequences of the vision, needs, fears and dreams of people around the world," Queen Noor emphasised the importance of "choosing our changes carefully" and basing it on "a respect of what already exists."

The statement said she noted that one of the most important recent changes is the replacement of "traditional national boundaries

and rivalries" by new global communication networks that are "hastening political, economic and social change" and have coalesced the world into an interconnected global village.

Life in a global village, according to the Queen,

at a very young age, as a man who has "retained in idealism normally attributed to youth, and which, coupled with the wisdom and pragmatism gained from his long experience, guides his enduring quest for peace."

Founded by philan-

UWC's students, the statement said.

According to the statement, in her keynote address, the Queen emphasised the importance of "nurturing young leaders in different fields, who are able to appreciate and act upon the historic opportunities that await them and their generation" adding that developed and developing countries alike need leaders who can "recognise and respond to the new realities of our fast changing world by building bridges across cultures and within communities."

She expressed her hope, the statement said, that the UWC's educational philosophy and internationalist values will contribute to the Middle East's historic transition from a state of war to a state of peace and cooperation, noting that, in return, the region's "spiritual legacy and ancient tradition of pluralism and tolerance will enrich considerably the UWC movement."

In addition to graduating educated young people, the UWC, according to the Queen, aims to graduate "educated young activists for peace and justice who can identify and help to resolve the challenges within their own societies."

The UWCs, located in Swaziland, Wales, Italy, Canada, Singapore, USA, Hong Kong, Norway and next year in India, select students from throughout the world based on merit, awarding the majority scholarships and emphasise diverse community service programmes within their educational curricula.

Most of their students study for the International Baccalaureate degree, a pre-university qualification, with the exception of the Simon Bolivar College in Venezuela, which offers a three-year diploma course in farm management and rural development.

The UWC's currently enroll 3,200 students from more than 100 countries, including Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, UAE, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Libya, Morocco and Tunis.



depends on the "healthy development of all households within the village" noting that "poverty and illness in one part of the world will result in tension or even violence in other parts of the village."

According to the statement, she urged the students to contribute to the "quality of life and prospects of our global village" adding that the latter will only prosper through the collective assistance of all its families.

She concluded her speech by encouraging the graduates to become bridges between generations, cultures and nations citing His Majesty King Hussein as a model.

Queen Noor, the statement said, described the King, who assumed his "massive responsibilities"

thropist Armand Hammer in 1982, the AHUWC is one of the nine UWCs located throughout the world and the only one in the United States.

Each year, 2,000 students come from 75 countries to study a two-year International Baccalaureate programme, including conflict resolution and wilderness courses.

The former course is designed to help students identify, resolve and defuse conflicts as well as develop teachable skills so that they can facilitate resolution meetings and dialogues, while the latter offer training in wilderness survival, rock-climbing, environmental studies and search and rescue.

Later, Queen Noor attended a dinner in New York to raise scholarship funds for

EU parliamentarians arrive today

Delegation to look at prospects of greater role in peace process

From Ghaila Ahl in Strasbourg

AN OFFICIAL European delegation on relations with the Mashreq countries and the Gulf states will arrive in Jordan Saturday on a fact-finding mission to the region which will include Syria and Lebanon, Ingo Fredrich president of the delegation and member of the European Parliament has said.

In an interview at the parliament Mr. Fredrich told the Jordan Times that the one-week visit is aimed at discussing the latest developments of the peace process and maintaining security and stability in the region.

He added, however, that the lack of a common foreign policy at the EU caused an internal problem and thus obstructed its political involvement in the Middle East.

"We have to formulate a common foreign policy" to be able to play a more powerful role in the region, said Mr. Fredrich.

He added that the European Parliament is also planning to create a common policy to encourage stronger

cooperation among countries of the Middle East.

Jan Sonneveld, a member of the visiting delegation and member of the Association for Euro-Arab Understanding, told the Jordan Times that the association agreements the EU is negotiating with Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon as well as those which it signed with some other countries of the Mediterranean basin have contributed to the enhancement of the EU's relations and its interest in the region.

Therefore, he said, the nine-member delegation will also discuss the conclusions of the Barcelona Conference and the follow up on its recommendations.

Mr. Sonneveld added that issues such as human rights will also be brought up during their visit. "We want to ensure more cooperation with countries that respect human rights," he said.

Mr. Fredrich said the members of the delegation, who represent several political and economic groups at the European Parliament, will meet with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti

Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf, Speaker of Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Lawzi, Speaker of Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour, and one also expected to meet with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

He added that they will also meet with ambassadors of the 15 EU member states and other Jordanian ministers and members of Parliament.

In Lebanon, they will meet with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and other ministers.

In Syria, they will meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouq Sharaa and other ministers.

At the end of the visit, Mr. Fredrich said the delegation will prepare a report on the political and economic situation in the three countries, for the presidency of the parliament and for other interested political committees.

The visit, he added, will also decide on the needs of each country and whether the projects financed by the EU need more improvement.

Parliament to return to chamber Kabariti to report on Mideast developments

AMMAN (Petra) — Parliament, currently in recess for the summer, is expected to convene informally this week to bear a report by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on the latest developments in the Middle East and the related government's stands, and also to hear the deputies' remarks about these developments.

Mr. Kabariti and Speaker of the Lower House Saad Hayel Srour agreed to the session during Mr. Kabariti's visit to the Parliament Thursday.

The prime minister briefed Mr. Srour on the outcome of His Majesty King Hussein's recent visits abroad and the Jordanian government's recent diplomatic activities which aimed at bolstering the kingdom's relations with the Arab countries.

Mr. Kabariti has



Abdul Karim Kabariti

expressed the government's readiness to keep the deputies posted on its actions and activities at the domestic and external levels, according to Mr. Srour.

The prime minister said the government was keen on maintaining the



Saad Hayel Srour

strongest possible ties with the rest of the Arab countries and on exerting efforts to end inter-Arab differences and ensure stronger Arab solidarity based on mutual respect.

The House speaker said after the meeting that the

discussion covered arrangements for holding an extraordinary session for the Lower House of Parliament as well as the other issues pertaining to Jordan's relations with the Arab countries.

Mr. Srour said Mr. Kabariti expressed the government's determination to improve Jordan's relations with all other Arab countries.

Mr. Srour also briefed Mr. Kabariti on the outcome of the latest Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) meeting in Damascus and sideline talks between Jordanian and other Arab parliamentarians.

He said a mechanism for implementing the new internal regulations for the Lower House of Parliament were also discussed at the meeting.

Yassin may urge end to violence

(Continued from page 1)

negotiations with Israel began to show real gains as Israel started ceding substantial blocks of territory.

Sheikh Yassin, a quadriplegic, founded the Hamas movement in 1988 shortly after the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule was launched.

He was arrested in 1989 and a military court in October 1991 sentenced him to life in prison for urging followers to kill Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel.

Israel's Channel Two television said the developments were apparently preludes to the Jewish state releasing Sheikh Yassin sometimes after next Wednesday's election.

"Hamas's new position in the West Bank and Gaza

Strip is to end attacks until final status talks are over... This is also the position of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin," a Hamas official, who spoke on condition he not be named, told Reuters.

Mr. Peres ordered unprecedented troop and police deployments ahead of the election and from Sunday a tightening of the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in force since the wave of attacks.

Hamas leaders in Gaza said this week that a dispute with Hamas leaders abroad, who wanted attacks to continue, was coming to a head.

One of them, Mahmoud Zahar, said of Hamas in Gaza and in most parts of the West Bank: "Hamas now has a very clear course, especially that Islamic law backs halting attacks."

Lebanon panel talks suspended

(Continued from page 1)

an agreement," said Denis Bauchard, a French foreign ministry official who took part in the talks. "There is a risk of incidents on the ground."

The Syrian and Lebanese envoys said the delay occurred because their Israeli counterparts had not received instructions from their government on an outstanding issue.

Other diplomats said the issue was the proposed group's decision-making procedure.

"We did not make much progress this time," Lebanese Ambassador Riad Tabbara said. "The next meeting is going to be on Tuesday. Hopefully, between now and then there will be instructions."

French officials said no firm decision had been taken on when the talks would resume and it could be on Wednesday.

Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich denied that his country was solely responsible. "Everything really doesn't depend just on us. There is work to be done with the three relevant capitals in the Middle East (of Israel, Syria and Lebanon)," he told reporters.

"This is an important agreement. It involves sensi-

tive issues. Rather than be rushed and make a hurried patchwork in order to finish at all costs today, we have wisely decided to take a few more days in order to conclude... We should be able to conclude fairly shortly," he said.

The Lebanon ceasefire ended a 17-day Israeli blitz against Hizbollah aimed at stopping guerrilla rocket fire against northern Israel. About 200 Lebanese civilians were killed and 400 injured in the Israeli attacks. About 50 Israelis were wounded.

The monitoring group, expected to be based in the South Lebanese border town of Naqoura, would investigate allegations of attacks against civilian targets, which are banned under the unsigned ceasefire "understanding."

Diplomats said the main unresolved question was whether the group would require a unanimous vote for its decisions or just a majority. They said Israel, apparently afraid of being outnumbered in majority votes, was holding out for unanimity.

They said the other outstanding point was the term length for the group's chairmanship, which is to alternate between the United States and France.

Antiquities team discovers Nabatean bath house

PETRA (Petra) — The Department of Antiquities Friday announced the discovery of the remains of an ancient building which is believed to be part of the ancient Wadi Mousa town called Al Jet near the archaeological site of Petra in southern Jordan.

Khalid Amr, who has been supervising the department's excavations, said diggers have found a Nabatean bath together with its two large water basins that served as reservoirs for the bath and water canals dating back to the first century A.D.

Dr. Amr said the Roman-style structure must have belonged to a notable in the Nabatean kingdom. She said four rooms found at

the site were all decorated with frescoes.

The excavators also found a mosaic floor, about six metres square in area, in one of the rooms describing the mosaics as the best finds so far in the Kingdom after those discovered in Mekawer and Madaba.

Dr. Amr said she believed that the building was destroyed by natural forces following the Nabatean rule, and was partially rebuilt in the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic eras.

She said the diggers, who started their excavations in February, found large quantities of pottery flasks and other items which will be displayed at the museums of Petra by the end of May.

More music on the way Euro-Arab jazz festival starts June 6

By Francesca Ciriaci Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN—While the successful European Film Festival is still being presented at the Hassan Bin Talal Auditorium of the University of Jordan, the delegation of the European Commission to Jordan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and the Department of Antiquities, launches the first Euro-Arab Jazz Festival, to be held under the patronage of HRH Prince Raad Bin Zeid, from June 6 to 18.

Jazz bands from Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Sweden and Jordan will perform in the beautiful frame of the Roman amphitheatre, in downtown Amman, and each concert will start at 9.30 p.m.

Spain will open the festival with the Victor Valls Quartet, followed by Faculty X, a Jordanian five-man band whose music reper-

toire focuses on jazz-Latin fusion.

Duo Radici from Italy will unite the best of popular Italian music with jazz, followed by Spain's Tete Montoliu, widely considered one of the greatest jazz piano-players in Europe and has played in Amman before, and the Rabih Abu Khalil Quintet from Germany, which combines oriental music and jazz.

France will be represented by two groups: the Sclavis/Pifarely acoustic quartet and the Cynthia MacPherson Quintet, with MacPherson's inimitable singing voice.

Closing the festival are Belgium's Nathalie Lories Trio, Austria's Grazer Saxophone Quartet and Sweden's Rollin Phones, a saxophone quartet made up of four female musicians.

The JD 2 tickets and the outstanding level of the artists performing promise to make the event a special success.

Tying the knot through advertisements

By Rana Sabbagh

AMMAN (R)—Teacher Fadwa Salem, still looking for a husband at the relatively advanced age of 29, pores over each edition of Jordan's only tabloid for advertisements from men eager to tie the knot.

"I am sure I will find the right suitor one day," said the veiled woman, eagerly glancing through the special section inside the mass-circulation weekly Shihani.

For many in Muslim, conservative Jordan, where most marriages take place early and are still arranged by parents who consider dating an unacceptable Western idea, Shihani offers a window of hope.

Advertisements for its section entitled "I seek a partner" come from all countries where Shihani is sold — as close as Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and as far away as Spain and America where emigrants have moved.

"It is a practical way and humanitarian mission to help people...I want to help anyone I can," said the editor of the popular, strictly confidential service launched in 1985, who asked that her name not be used.

"It is an indescribable

feeling of happiness when you succeed in bringing two people together," she said in an interview, interrupted by a barrage of phone calls from advertisers eager to know if there were any responses.

Egypt and Lebanon, relatively more Westernised, began the service decades ago after picking up the idea from Italy and Greece.

Clients placing the free ads include widowers and divorcees seeking to start over, and Jordanians looking for a partner who can offer life and a fresh nationality outside the Kingdom.

Requests also come from some blind and handicapped people.

The editor has helped more than 15 couples marry since she took over in late 1995, including three who now live in Australia.

Most keep in touch with her after they get married.

She screens ads, rejecting those suspected of not being serious, then checks out responses in a huge log book on the desk, giving each a number.

A meeting is suggested between likely matches. "A Jordanian Muslim, a university graduate and holder of U.S. nationality who never married before, 30, is searching for a beautiful, tall, sociable and edu-

cated miss below the age of 22 and ready to live in America," says a typical ad.

Another reads: "A 30-year-old Muslim, Iraqi female says she needs a husband who respects family life, regardless if he is a widower or a divorcee and provided he has a good income, no children and is 30 to 41 years old."

Marriage in Islam, is a two-part process, the agreement between the couple witnessed by a cleric and the announcement of the marriage has taken place through a wedding.

In most cases, couples have their first encounter to discuss future plans, many times accompanied by family members, at Shihani's office in Amman.

But editors at the weekly are quick to say the newspaper is not a dating service — "Our aim is to get them together, after that, we do not intervene," said one.

The editor says Jordan has become more accepting of the idea of marriage ads. "In the beginning, many ad-placers wanted it to remain a secret," she said.

"Now, we even have mothers and fathers encouraging their children to seek our help and even calling me to ask if their children had any luck from a suitable caller." U.S.-educated sociologist

Sabri Rubeihat said the move from a close tribal structure to a more individualistic urban society had changed relations between people, forcing them to find new means to satisfy social needs, including marriage.

"Before, the tribe was the basic unit...Each member was known to the other and most marriages were arranged within that structure and by their families," Dr. Rubeihat said.

This is still common among conservative, religious and tribal segments of society.

Official figures show one in every three marriages in Jordan is still between first cousins.

But rapid social change has hit other Jordanians. The age at marriage is rising and so are divorces.

"New local societies were born that lack the features of the tribalistic society, most members do not know each other and are forced to look for new means to meet each other, including newspaper ads," Dr. Rubeihat said.

Urbanisation has also meant opportunities other than tabloid ads for meeting partners, such as the presence of more women in universities and the labour force.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

• Exhibition of photos of French artists and books by Yvan Pommaux and Christophe Besse at the French Cultural Centre, until May 31.

• Bani Hamida annual spring exhibition "Visions," until May 26.

• Works from the collection of Musa del Gradaha Espanol contemporary Marbella "From Picasso to Our Present Days," at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until June 6.

• Exhibition of metal-made furniture by Salim Bandak of the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, until May 31.

• Recent works by Ayyad Al Nimer at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until June 12.

Boats bring back distorted bodies from Tanzanian ferry wreck

MWANZA, Tanzania (AFP) — Fishing boats were bringing in grotesquely distorted bodies Friday — most of them with arms raised — from the wreck of the ferry Bukoba in Lake Victoria.

Rigor mortis had set in, but the bodies were bloating already, and the stench of putrefaction at the jetty was overpowering.

On the fishing boat decks, the bodies — brought up by divers — were tangled like untidy firewood.

On shore, rescue workers wearing gauze masks and rubber gloves put them on stretchers, where they fumed awkwardly, with arms raised as if in supplication, or a desperate last attempt to escape.

Eyes were still open, and water was lapping out of some of the wide-open mouths.

The ferry sank Tuesday after capsizing in calm weather and water about five nautical miles off this town on the southeastern

shore of Africa's biggest lake.

It sank seven hours later, with doomed passengers banging throughout that time at the bulkheads, after rescuers cut two holes in the hull and allowed the air inside to escape.

They pulled one man out of one of the holes, and two others swam to safety, but the rest went down with the ship.

The government put the death toll at 549, but the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said it feared the real toll was more than 800.

The official capacity of the 17-year-old vessel was 441. There were 114 survivors, picked up by a flotilla of big and small rescue boats.

The bodies being brought in Friday were driven to a central stadium, where the Federation set up huge tents as makeshift morgues — one for males, one for females.

Police barred onlookers from the jetty, but thousands of people — all subdued — gathered at the stadium to try to identify relatives or friends.

The heat was intense, and the morgue tents, where the bodies were covered in plastic, had no fans or ice.

Officials were preparing a roped-off pathway to allow the crowd to file through without developing into a mob.

Federation official Omar Valdimarsson, of Iceland, said that bodies identified would be released immediately to the relatives.

Recovery of the corpses will continue over the coming days, with the condition of the bodies progressively deteriorating. "It is not going to be easy to identify them all," Mr. Valdimarsson said, adding that officials were looking into the possibility of transferring bodies to fish processing plants with cold-stores.

Observers noted that such identification techniques as

analysis of dental work and surgery would apply to only a few of the passengers, with most never having visited a dentist or doctor.

The bodies that remain unidentified will be buried in a mass grave in Mwanza with Muslim, Christian and Hindu clergy reading funeral rites, Mr. Valdimarsson said.

A loudspeaker van meanwhile toured the streets of Mwanza, which has a population of more than a million, urging all those who suspected relatives were among the dead to go to the stadium, and streets were choked with sombre pedestrians.

The government was providing transport for people to take relatives back to their home towns and villages for burial.

The bodies going back to Bukoba, 94 nautical miles away on the western shore of the lake — the ferry's starting point — would return there in another ferry, Mr. Valdimarsson said.

Seven divers from Tanzania and two from Kenya were at the wreck site Friday, and 20 more were due to fly in from South Africa later in the day.

But Mr. Valdimarsson said the lakebed at that point was muddy. "Visibility is virtually zero," he said. "There is no way they will recover all the bodies."

He said Muslim leaders had calculated that there were 881 passengers aboard the ferry, but it was clear Friday that the precise number will never be known, with many passengers boarding without tickets and infants under the age of three undocumented.

Investigators were working Friday on the theory that the ferry — built in Belgium and assembled on the lake — capsized because passengers rushed to one side as it was approaching Mwanza.



Red Cross workers and Tanzania port police bring ashore a body from the capsized ship in Mwanza, Tanzania. The MV Bukoba sank Tuesday morning, taking down more than 500 people some of whose bodies are still trapped in the sunken vessel (Reuters photo)

General's arrest sends Spain probe into high gear

MADRID (R) — A top general in Spain's Civil Guard was detained Thursday as a suspect in the kidnapping, torture and murder of two presumed Basque guerrillas during a 1980s "dirty war" on separatist ETA rebels.

The High Court's decision to order General Enrique Rodriguez Galindo held in a military jail outside Madrid made him the most senior security forces officer to land behind bars since Spanish judges began probing a campaign in which 27 people died from 1983 to 1987.

His detention shocked the two-week-old conservative government and outraged senior members of the former Socialist administration, who deny charges that they engineered the secret campaign against ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom).

Former Socialist Interior Minister Jose Barrionuevo, already indicted by the Supreme Court on charges of setting up and running anti-ETA death squads, called a news conference with two former colleagues to say they would fully share responsibility with their former subordinates and would gladly go to jail too.

Mr. Barrionuevo, his successor Jose Luis Corcuera and former State Secretary for Security Rafael Vera insisted at the news conference that they had never broken the law.

Another Civil Guard general said the paramilitary corps, which is at the forefront of the fight against ETA, was deeply pained to see the highly respected Gen. Galindo dragged behind bars.

"We ought to be grateful for General Galindo's efforts," General Quintillano Perez Monedero told local media.

The High Court ruled there was enough evidence to charge Gen. Galindo, who was a top adviser to the head of the Civil Guard

until last week, with three counts related to the death of presumed ETA members Jose Antonio Lasa and Jose Ignacio Zabala.

In a strong hint that the Socialist government of the time might itself have been involved, High Court Judge Javier Gomez De Liano said there were signs that Gen. Rodriguez Galindo committed the crimes "probably following orders from his superiors."

Lasa and Zabala went missing in France in 1983 and their dumped bodies were discovered in south-east Spain in 1995.

Gen. Galindo worked in the Basque region for 26 years, almost exclusively against ETA. He has been decorated 26 times, including with the Civil Guard Gold Cross.

He is a former head of the Intxaurrondo Base near San Sebastian, renowned for its tough tactics against guerrillas.

The then Socialist government promoted him from colonel to general last August despite concern that his anti-ETA actions may have been linked with the death squads, known as the GAL (Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups).

Basque nationalists and members of the Communist-led United Left (IU), who had criticised his promotion, welcomed Thursday's detention order.

Inaki Anasagasti of the moderate Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) said the move was doubly satisfying for his party because it had long suspected Gen. Galindo of involvement in the GAL.

Gen. Galindo had already been charged this month in connection with the murder of presumed ETA member Ramon Onanderra in a separate case being investigated by the High Court.

U.S. smashes China arms smuggling ring

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Federal agents have smashed an arms smuggling ring involving two government-run Chinese munitions firms, seizing the biggest haul of automatic weapons in U.S. history, officials said Thursday.

U.S. agents arrested seven people in northern California Wednesday who are charged with being involved in the ring, the U.S. attorney's office in San Francisco said.

Arrest warrants have also been issued for an eighth California resident and six Chinese nationals including several high-ranking officials of the state-controlled China Northern Industrial Corp (NORINCO), it said.

The arrests stemmed from the seizure in March of 2,000 AK-47 fully automatic machine guns and 4,000 ammunition magazines each containing 30 to 40 rounds, with a total street value of more than \$4 million.

"This is an incredible arsenal," Michael Yamaguchi, U.S. attorney for northern California, said at a press conference where 50 of the seized AK-47s were displayed.

It was the largest seizure of fully operational automatic weapons in the history of U.S. law enforcement, the U.S. attorney's office said. The guns, with both Chinese NORINCO and Korean markings, were smuggled into the United States by ship.

"These weapons weren't built for hunting pheasant. They have one purpose only: to kill people," U.S. Customs Service Commissioner George Weiss said in a statement.

Suspects in the case had offered in sell much more powerful weapons to undercover agents, including mortars, rocket launchers, machine guns, hand grenades and even a surface-to-air missile, Mr. Yamaguchi said.

The gun seizure was the culmination of a 16-month investigation of high-ranking officials, based in both the United States and China, of Polytech and NORINCO, both state-controlled Chinese munitions manufacturing companies.

Polytech "was for several years" headed by He Ping, son-in-law of senior Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, Justice Department sources said.

"We consider this to be a very serious case," Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick told reporters in Washington. She declined comment on whether Chinese officials had been aware of the operation.

The arms operation could cause further strains in already tense U.S.-China relations as the United States considers renewing most favored nation trading treatment for China. On Monday, President Bill Clinton said he intended to extend to China for another year favorable tariff rates despite criticism of some of its policies.

The State Department said the breakup of the smuggling ring should not add new tensions to Sino-American relations.

The shipment of the 2,000 guns from the Dalian plant of NORINCO involved the active participation of the firm's China-based vice-president, export manager and other officials, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Three of the suspects — Kevin Wong, 36, Susan Lin, 39 and Linda Huang, 55 — appeared before a U.S. magistrate in San Francisco to face gun-smuggling charges. They were ordered held pending a detention hearing and were not asked to plead.

An initial court appearance for a fourth suspect, Chen, was postponed until Thursday afternoon so that a Mandarin Chinese interpreter could be present.

A key figure in the alleged smuggling ring told undercover U.S. agents three times that the Chinese government knew what was happening, according to court documents.



President Bill Clinton (right) points out a sign to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl as the two are greeted by Milwaukee school children prior to a public appearance at Milwaukee's Pere Marquette Park Thursday (Reuters photo)

Clinton and Kohl push for Yeltsin in Russian election

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (R) — President Bill Clinton and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl voiced support for the reelection of Russian President Boris Yeltsin at a summit Thursday in this midwestern city with teutonic roots.

The two leaders also signed an agreement that permits unrestricted commercial airline service between their two nations, and a related pact meant to enhance international flight safety.

Mr. Clinton said the "open skies" agreement would create "the largest fully open bilateral market in the entire world of aviation, dramatically increasing opportunities for consumers and flexibility for our airlines."

At a joint news conference, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Kohl made no secret of their preference for Mr. Yeltsin in Russia's June 16 election, in which challenger Gennady Zyuganov is making a bid to restore the Communist Party to power.

"I observe closely what is going on there and I do hope... that the present president will win the election," Mr. Kohl told reporters through an interpreter.

Only slightly more circumspect, Mr. Clinton said that Mr. Yeltsin "and the other forces of reform in Russia, it seems to me, represent the future, and we do hope the Russian people will vote for the future."

But the Clinton-Kohl meeting in Milwaukee, a city of 700,000 people on the western shore of Lake Michigan, was as much about symbolizing U.S. links with Germany and the strength of relations between Washington and Bonn as it was about substance.

After their meeting, they addressed a crowd that the Secret Service said numbered 10,000 people in a local park where the French missionary explorer Marquette once camped, and Mr. Clinton said he had invited Mr. Kohl to "come to a place where he could get some really great bratwurst."

Milwaukee, with a large German-American population, is famed for its restaurants specializing in sausage and other hearty German fare.

But Mr. Clinton and Kohl, both large men

with big appetites, confounded expectations by passing up a visit to one of these, choosing instead to stop at Miss Katie's Diner on the edge of the Marquette University campus, which features typical American fare.

There they munched on barbecued short ribs and chicken wings before plunging into a main luncheon course that included vegetable meatball soup, steak, lemon chicken and meat loaf with hash-brown potatoes and green beans.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Kohl, who sampled a local lager with their meal, made a dessert of apple pie.

Mr. Kohl, on his 23rd visit to the United States since becoming Germany's leader in 1982, flew to Washington afterward as the president's guest on Air Force One.

The climate of bonhomie surrounding the Clinton-Kohl meeting masked continuing friction between their governments over relations with Iran.

Washington believes a tough line is the only way to end what it says is Iran's support for terrorism, undermining of the Middle East peace process and moves to develop nuclear weapons.

Bonn, traditionally a big supplier of technology to Iran, says its contacts have helped reduce human rights abuses and persuade Iran to sign the international chemical weapons convention.

Mr. Clinton played down the seriousness of the dispute, calling Mr. Kohl as staunch an opponent of terrorism as any Western leader.

The two leaders said they also talked about NATO expansion but they broke no new ground in their public comments on the issue. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation next month is expected to approve a new post-cold war shape with greater emphasis on rapid reaction forces and more autonomy for the alliance's European wing.

But the gathering of NATO foreign ministers is not expected to deal with the issue of expansion — in part because of the Russian election. Many Russians, fearing encirclement, are against former Warsaw Pact allies joining the alliance.

France steps in to lead talks with C. African army rebels

BANGUI (AFP) — France took over direct negotiations with rebels in the Central African Republic capital of Bangui here Friday after helping loyalist troops to restore order.

Talks between French General Bernard Thorette and spokesmen for army mutineers took place Friday at a French military base near here, said an aide to President Felix-Angre Patasse.

The aide, Roland Dana, said the Central African government was not taking part because the mutineers had broken off negotiations last Wednesday.

Mr. Dana, who was speaking at Mr. Patasse's residence, guarded by loyal troops and French soldiers, said that "last Wednesday, the mutineers became putschists and rebels because they called for the immediate resignation of President Patasse."

He said that after the rebels threatened Mr. Patasse with death, the president asked France to act in compliance with its defence agreement with the republic and that Paris had sent Gen. Thorette on a conciliation mission.

The situation was calmer in Bangui Friday after two days of violence which saw an attack by the rebels on the national radio station Wednesday and an anti-

French demonstration Thursday when the French Cultural Centre was looted and torched.

Contacted by telephone a Bangui resident said there had been some firing overnight, but that French army patrols were enforcing a curfew although some armed rebels were driving around the streets.

The resident said most shops were closed and that their owners had organised a system of guards to prevent looting.

Gen. Thorette and two spokesmen representing soldiers opposed to President Ange-Felix Patasse had a first contact at the Beal Base Thursday to assess grievances.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bangui also attended the talks.

The meeting "allowed everyone to make clear his position," a French military spokesman said.

Meanwhile French military sources said that the evacuation of foreign nationals from the tense Central African capital was continuing Friday, with 700 due to be flown to the Babonese capital Libreville.

On Friday the two rebel officers — Warrant Officer Isidore Dodoko and Sergeant Cyriac Souke — were flown to the talks in a French military helicopter from the Kasai Barracks, the mutineers' stronghold a few kilometres from central Bangui.

The rebels mutinied last Saturday demanding payment of a backlog of wages.

Foreigners were also to be taken from their homes to protected areas in some 20 armored carriers which arrived in the Central African Republic late Thursday aboard Russian transport planes chartered by the French.

France now has 2,300 troops in its former colony as compared to 1,400 before the outbreak of violence last week.

In Paris, French Defence Minister Charles Millon said he was "worried about the atmosphere of anarchy" in the former French colony.

France will stick to the agreements it signed with the country, he added.

"The French army has a difficult role to play," he said on French radio.

"It must be able to carry out its mission to prove that France keeps its word. There is a risk of anarchy, but France must abide by the accords which it concluded," he added.

Mr. Millon said the deployment of French troops in Bangui was designed to "ensure security and the safety of 2,400 (foreign) nationals within the framework of a cooperation and defence treaty signed between the Central African Republic and France."

'Gun-toting granny' pleads insanity

LOS ANGELES (R) — A 71-year-old grandmother who allegedly tried to rob a gas station at gunpoint to pay off a tax bill pleaded not guilty to armed robbery charges, saying she was driven insane by the Internal Revenue Service. Mary Blanco, dubbed the "gun-toting granny," sat quietly in court as her attorney, Jack Alex, entered the plea of insanity on her behalf. He said she was driven crazy by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which had told her they intended to take half of her husband's \$750 monthly pension for eight months to pay off a \$3,000 income tax debt. The IRS has since informed Ms. Blanco and her husband they will be given extra time to pay their taxes.

German court rules policemen may wear plaits

FRANKFURT (R) — German policemen have the right to wear their hair in a plait, even on the beat, and cannot be ordered by their superiors to remove it, a German court said. The administrative court in Kassel ruled that ordering a policeman to cut his plait would be a violation of his rights as an individual. The ruling was in response to a complaint by a police officer who had been ordered to remove his plait.

French chefs fret over loss of traditional dishes

PARIS (R) — A dozen celebrity chefs have sounded a warning that foreign flavours are polluting the purity of French cooking, threatening traditional dishes that have made France a world leader in the kitchen. "Nowadays, cooking tends to take on an international flavour. We are alarmed to see the tendency among some who want to mix anything with everything on a plate to give the illusion of innovation at any price," they said in a joint statement. The chefs, including Georges Blanc, Alain Ducasse, Bernard Loiseau, and Joel Robuchon, called on the authorities and young cooks to return to the basics in French cooking.

'Britons losing manners, becoming louts'

LONDON (R) — Britons, once renowned the world over for being polite and well-mannered, have become a nation of slovenly louts, a leading think-tank said. "Britain is becoming ruder," said Dr. Digby Anderson of the Social Affairs Unit who led 12 academics in a study of British manners — or rather the lack of them. "Loutishness on the streets, slovenly and aggressive dress, swearing, cheating sportsmen, parents aping the style and slang of teenagers and a false chumminess from doctors and other professions point to a crisis in manners," said Dr. Anderson.

Sherpa scales Everest for record 10th time

KATHMANDU (AFP) — A Nepalese Sherpa climber has proved himself among the toughest mountaineers in history by climbing to the world's highest point atop 8,848-metre (29,028-foot) Mount Everest a record tenth time, Nepal announced Friday. Ang Rita Sherpa, 48, known in mountaineering circles as "Mountain Leopard," reached the Everest peak Thursday without oxygen along with two members of a seven-member Swedish expedition, the announcement from the Nepalese Tourism Ministry said. Since his first ascent on May 7, 1983, Ang Rita Sherpa has not used bottled oxygen to scale Everest.



North Korean pilot Captain Li Chol-Su waves to South Korean military officials shortly after landing his North Korean MiG-19 fighter at Suwon Air Base Thursday (Reuters photo)

Seoul ready to return N. Korean defector's MiG

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea will return a MiG-19 jet fighter piloted to the South by a defector in the unlikely event the North asks for it, Yonhap News Agency quoted a senior official as saying here Friday.

"There is no reason for us not to respond if the North demands the return of the plane," the unnamed official said. The MiG-19 was flown South Thursday by a 30-year-old defectoring North Korean Air Force pilot whose dramatic cross-border flight showed up loopholes in both countries' defence preparedness.

"If talks for its return are concluded successfully, then the plane will be returned in accordance with international procedures and the precedent set by the past repatriation of a Chinese civilian aircraft," the official said.

In 1983, Seoul repatriated a Trident passenger jet piloted here by a group of Chinese defectors. The Trident repatriation negotiations prompted the first talks between Beijing and Seoul, which were then still frozen in cold war hostility.

Officials were not immediately available for comment here, where Friday is a public holiday marking the birthday of Buddha.

However, the official was also quoted as saying that there was "little possibility" of Pyongyang asking publicly for the plane to be returned, adding that he expected North Korea to "ignore the incident."

He noted that there had been no official reaction from the North in 1983, the last time a North Korean Air Force pilot defected to the South with his plane, also a MiG-19.

Pyongyang was also unlikely to link the MiG incident to its response to a four-way peace proposal put forward by the United States and South Korea last month, or any other political issue, the official predicted.

North Korea has said it is studying the peace overture by U.S. President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam that the two hostile Koreas meet, with Washington and Beijing in support roles, to work out a permanent peace on the divided peninsula.

In Seoul Friday officials said the defector had exposed gaping loopholes in the military preparedness of both Koreas.

During the 19 minutes air force Captain Li Chol-Su took to fly his plane South, North Korea failed to scramble a single aircraft to stop him, the officials told journalists.

Radio transmissions between air bases in the North, monitored in the South, showed the North Korean Air Force fell into a state of confusion when Capt. Li suddenly headed South during a flight training mission.

In an indication that North Korean radar had lost track of Capt. Li's plane immediately after he turned South, air force headquarters asked the command post of the First Aviation Division: "Did you guys see the plane heading out toward the sea?"

When the North detected Capt. Li's plane over the southwestern city of Haerye, it was already too late to stop the jet dashing south at a speed of 842 kilometres per hour, they said.

South Korean fighter jets on duty were alerted to Capt. Li's flight direction only 20 seconds after it broke out of the three-plane formation and turned tail, the officials said.

North Korea has been putting emphasis on building up its



North Korean pilot Captain Li Chol-Su waves to members of the South Korean press during a hastily arranged press conference shortly after he landed his North Korean MiG-19 fighter at Suwon Air Base Thursday (Reuters photo)

air force since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Air superiority by the U.S.-led United Nations Forces is credited with depriving the North of its earlier gains in the war.

Pyongyang has a total of 1,640 military aircraft, including its mainstay Mig-21s and Mig-23s.

South Korea, with some 1,300 aircraft, is considered superior in technology over the North and is backed by more than 200 top-of-the-line U.S. aircraft.

But despite the picture-perfect reaction by the air force, the defection revealed a glaring hole in South Korea's air defence warning system.

The air raid warning system in Seoul failed, leaving the city's 11 million residents, only 58 kilometres and less than a minute's flying time from the tense border, unalarmed as the North Korean fighter headed their way at high speed.

A furious President Kim Young-Sam called for a thorough investigation into the failure and an overhaul of the country's air raid warning system and red-faced city officials apologised to the people.

Russians complete capture of Bamut

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian troops have completed the capture of Bamut, the ruined village where Chechen fighters had held out for more than a year, Russia's chief of staff Mikhail Kolesnikov said Friday.

The last pockets of resistance were overcome by 2:50 p.m. (1050 GMT), he was quoted as saying by the Interfax News Agency.

"I can definitely say this was the last major military operation (battle) on the territory of the Chechen republic," he said.

Bamut, held by Chechen rebels, who are fighting for independence for their tiny Caucasus republic, for more than a year despite a Russian siege.

There have already been several attempts to storm the village which has been a pile of rubble and deserted by non-combatants for months.

Russian troops launched their decisive attack Thursday after a week of saturation shelling, bombing and rocketing.

Interfax reported earlier that rebels had heavily mined the area, making progress difficult for Russian troops, and that resistance was continuing in the west and south of the village.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said 400 rebels had been killed, but there was no independent confirmation or other proof of this. He said 30 Russian soldiers had been killed, although Russian officials have quoted figures of killed and dozens wounded.

Russian television showed about a dozen captured rifles and weapons, but no other signs that the rebels had suffered major losses.

The television also showed footage of soldiers inside the ruined village Thursday firing on buildings at a blank range with cannons.

The massive assault to capture Bamut came as unexpected peace talks were announced between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Chechen separatist leader

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

President Yeltsin and Mr. Yandarbiyev will meet Monday in the Kremlin and declare an immediate ceasefire, the top Chechen military commander told reporters.

"At the start of the talks, there will be a ceasefire ordered by the two presidents. And at the end, they will sign a document to declare the end of the war and the opening of a peace process," Aslan Maskhadov told Western reporters in southern Chechnya Thursday.

Mr. Maskhadov, in an interview with the French newspapers Liberation and Le Figaro, the British paper the Times, and the Norwegian paper Arbeiderbladet, said talks on Chechnya's political status could wait until after Russia's presidential elections June 16.

"Our first aim is to end the war — that's the essential of this meeting," Mr. Maskhadov said.

"We do not foresee any concession on the status of the republic, but we are ready to put this question aside," he said.

"If we address the status issue from the start of the negotiations, we will never agree, because Boris Yeltsin could never come out in favour of total (Chechen) independence, especially before the elections," he said.

The newspaper interviews were to be published Saturday.

Meanwhile President Yeltsin has ruled out granting independence to Chechnya, a close aide said Friday.

Mr. Yeltsin is seeking "peace, preservation of Russia and its unity and restoration of constitutional order in the Chechen Republic," said Mr. Yeltsin's political aide Sergey Filatov, Echo Moscow radio reported.

Forces "not supporting the peace process and continuing to terrorise society must either leave, or be destroyed," Mr. Filatov quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying.

Heavy voting reported in Kashmir polls

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Indian officials reported heavier than expected voting Thursday in the Kashmir Valley's first elections in seven years, but there were complaints that people had been forced to vote.

Officials dismissed the charges and said there had been no violence in elections in two parliamentary constituencies where separatist militants had threatened to kill poll officials.

"You should be happy to know that there is no incident of violence, no incident of rigging, and no complaint from any candidate," election official Jilal Ahmad Khan told rowdy news conference. Reporters shouted that they had seen violence.

Witnesses said police fired shots in the air to disperse about 1,000 demonstrators and also used tear gas and batons in Baramulla, 60 kilometres northwest of Srinagar.

No one was seriously injured. Witnesses said police were responding to attempts to disrupt voting. People in the crowd said they were protesting against efforts by security men to force them to vote.

"We do not want elections, we want freedom," screamed a group of women before police fired bullets in the air and tear gas shells onto the streets.

Indian authorities and separatists who have waged a six-year war against New Delhi's rule of Jammu and Kashmir, the largely Hindu nation's only Muslim-majority state, both saw the elections as a referendum.

Officials said a turnout of 25 per cent Thursday would be a satisfactory endorsement of Kashmir remaining in India despite a revolt in which police and hospitals say more than 20,000 people have been killed.

Militants wanted a low turnout to prove support for their cause and called for a boycott.

Polling took place in the Anantnag and Baramulla constituencies, two of the state's six seats in the 545-member federal parliament. In the last such elections, in 1989, turnout in the two areas was barely five per cent.

Election officials said that on Thursday there was a 35 per cent turnout in Baramulla and 45 per cent in Anantnag.

"I am glad that ordinary Kashmiris have given a befitting reply to the forces which were bent upon thwarting the election process," Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said in a statement in New Delhi.

13 missing in Bangladesh ferry crash

DHAKA (AFP) — Rescue workers were continuing to search Friday for 13 people still missing after a Bangladesh ferry sank after colliding with another ferry in the Jamuna River.

Police Friday downgraded to 13 the number of people missing after scores of passengers swam ashore or were rescued by boats, police officer Mohammad Rahman, told AFP by telephone from the Manikganj district, some 100 kilometres from Dhaka.

Rescue workers and police traced 10 of the 100 people earlier reported missing and feared dead after the accident overnight.

"Most of the passengers swam ashore or were rescued by boats which came from nearby villages," he said.

Four people were hospitalised, the rescue workers said after first aid, he said.

Divers, who arrived on the scene from Dhaka, were trying to locate the missing passengers, who may be trapped inside the sunken vessel, Mr. Zaman added.

The ferry, ML Mobaraki, sank with 150 passengers on board after colliding with a transport ferry Bir Shreshtha Bahangir. There were no casualties on the transport vessel.

No bodies have been recovered yet, Mr. Zaman said. He said the currents were fairly strong in the area as the collision occurred near a channel.

Officials from Manikganj, the closest administrative district to the site of the accident, were supervising salvage and rescue operations.

Bangladesh's worst ferry disaster was in 1994, when 275 people died when a ship sank in the Meghna River.

According to Shipping Ministry figures, some 1,500 people have been killed in ferry accidents in Bangladesh over the past 10 years.

The worst year was 1986 when 426 people died in nine ferry disasters.

Ferries are one of the most common modes of transport in Bangladesh, a country criss-crossed by more than 230 rivers. Some 1,050 ferries ply the waterways.

Past ferry disasters have been blamed mainly on overloading, poor maintenance of the vessels, inexperienced skippers and ignorance about weather bulletins, according to a study by the International Marine Organisation.

Another major problem is the lack of safety measures despite a government effort to tighten different maritime laws, which are routinely flouted.

A large number of people also travel on the rooftops of ferries despite a ban.

U.S. to sell 465 'Stingers' to Taiwan

WASHINGTON (R) — The Clinton administration said Thursday it planned to sell 465 shoulder-fired "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles to Taiwan for \$84 million to improve Taipei's air defence capability.

The planned sale, which also would include 55 mobile launcher systems and 55 training missiles, follows high political and military tension between China and Taiwan earlier this year over Taiwan's presidential election.

The Stingers, among the world's most sophisticated lightweight anti-aircraft weapons, are made by Hughes Aircraft Co. and would be sold to Taiwan unless Congress raises unexpected objections.

The administration promised the Stingers and other defence arms to Taipei on March 20, just three days before Taiwan's democ-

cratic presidential elections.

In the run-up to those elections, China conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait and held large-scale military manoeuvres to stress that it considers Taiwan a rebel province.

Washington, in turn, sent warships to the area to emphasise its close ties with Taipei despite official U.S. Recognition of the Communist government in Beijing as the only government of China.

But the warships were quickly withdrawn after the elections and tensions in the region have since subsided. The United States, however, has made clear that it is willing to continue selling weaponry to prosperous Taiwan for its defence.

"The missiles will be used to upgrade air defence capabilities," the Pentagon said.

Opposition detentions rise to 217 in Burma

RANGOON (AFP) — Burma's military rulers Friday continued a roundup of pro-democracy activists, with 217 now in detention, a National League for Democracy (NLD) spokesman said.

The 217 include 195 NLD candidates who won seats in the 1990 general elections, 12 members of the NLD youth organisation and 10 other NLD supporters, the spokesman said.

NLD sources said they expected the number of detainees to continue to rise ahead of a planned meeting opening Sunday to mark the sixth anniversary of the abortive 1990 polls.

The NLD swept 392 of 485 contested seats in the election, but the ruling junta refused to yield power. Many NLD candidates were jailed at the time or fled into exile abroad as the military cracked down on pro-democracy forces.

"Only one-fourth are left," a source close to the NLD said earlier, referring to the latest wave of detentions.

"We heard that some more may have been arrested, as well," the source added. There were no details.

The junta, officially known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), launched a roundup of NLD supporters to head off the planned party meeting at the Rangoon home of NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi from May 26 to 29.

She has pledged to forge ahead with the meeting despite the detentions and the junta's expressed concern at the NLD's "confrontational course."

She also said she would make her usual weekly appearance at the gate to her lakeside residence Saturday, where she addresses crowds of up to 4,000 people.

Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD leaders were holding meetings "just within the close inner circle" Friday, the source said.

Although several Asian nations appear more willing to come and invest in Burma, many Western nations have called on the government to improve its human rights record before they will help encourage investment or resume aid to Burma.

Ms. Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel Peace laureate, reiterated a plea to foreign investors not to come to Burma until the SLORC agrees to move toward democracy.

"I think that those who are in favour of investment in Burma will have to rethink," she told a news conference. She also asked tourists not to visit Burma until democra-



Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is surrounded by her supporters as she talks with reporters at her house in Rangoon Thursday. Ms. Suu Kyi said despite the increasing of pressure from ruling military government the planned meeting on May 26 of her National League for Democracy (NLD) members will continue as scheduled (Reuters photo)

cy was restored. The United States urged Americans not to travel to Burma because of the crackdown and the potential for violence and officials in Washington said they were exploring the possibility of further sanctions on the country.

The United States, which along with other countries such as Australia and Britain this week strongly criticised Burma for detaining NLD members, is currently debating a proposal to impose economic sanctions on the country.

Tigers escalate attacks as Jaffna limps back to normal

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas shot dead two security personnel and wounded six students and four soldiers as civil administration was being restored for the first time in 10 years, officials said Friday.

Gunnmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) infiltrated an area brought under security force control and shot dead the two troopers Thursday at Kodikamam in the Jaffna peninsula, officials said.

They said an air force officer escaped with injuries. In another attack, the LTTE lobbed a grenade near an army post at Chavakachcheri also in Jaffna, wounding six Tamil students.

The Defence Ministry said that the guerrillas also set off a land mine under a military vehicle in the east of the country Thursday, wounding three soldiers.

The latest violence came as businessmen and more public servants poured into the area in a bid to revive the normal civil administration and trading that had been disrupted for nearly 10 years.

The local partner of Germany's Mercedes Benz has announced plans to resume business in the Jaffna peninsula in a bid to take advantage of the reconstruction of Jaffna which was wrested from Tamil Tiger control.

The Diesel and Motor Engineering Company (DIMECO), the local agent, said they were urgently looking for distributors and agents for their products in Jaffna.

The announcement came as security forces Thursday airlifted 95 public servants and their families to Jaffna to revive the civil administration in the region brought under total government control earlier this month.

The immediate reconstruction of Jaffna is estimated to cost \$200 million but the overall rehabilitation is expected to exceed \$1 billion. Security forces have already initiated preliminary work.

Thousands of Tamils poured into Vavuniya, south of Jaffna, when fighting flared in October last year eventually resulting in government forces driving out the LTTE in April from their de facto state in the peninsula.

However, land routes to Jaffna remain blocked by the guerrillas but the military has said it plans to open road access to the former citadel of the Tamil Tigers.

Jordan Times

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An occasion for jubilation

THE 50TH anniversary of Jordan's independence is an occasion for not only celebration but also stock-taking of the milestones in the history of the country. Officially, Jordan became an independent state on May 25, 1946 with His Majesty the late King Abdullah as the Constitutional monarch. The step came on the heels of several other measures that dated back to 1921 when Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein was declared the Emir and ruler of Trans-Jordan. In actual terms, therefore, Jordan, as a state, was established long before 1946 having passed through many stages of state-building and gaining gradual control over its destiny from the British government.

We as people of the country must seize upon this golden jubilee of the independence of our country to pause at every important juncture in its formation and consolidation. We have chosen to commemorate the Nov. 28, 1946 endorsement of the new Constitution on the basis of separation of powers among the three principal branches of government as the beginning of modern state-building. Then came the first ever election of a chamber of deputies on Oct. 20 of 1947 on the basis of the new Constitution. This very Lower House of Parliament denounced the U.N. resolution to partition Palestine on Dec. 2, 1947, thereby setting in motion the country's long record of deep involvement in the Palestinian question.

The assassination of the late King Abdullah on July 20, 1951 must have been the most shocking development that took place in the early life of the country. The killing of the founder of the Kingdom reverberated throughout the country and sent shock waves across the entire Middle East. It would be a fair assessment to state that the Hashemite Kingdom was dealt a severe blow by the sudden passing away of King Abdullah who is remembered as a man of vision and peace. His Majesty King Talal was crowned as the monarch on Sept. 6, 1951 and it was during his reign that the 1952 Constitution was adopted.

The accession of His Majesty King Hussein to the Throne on May 2, 1953, however, remains the single most important event after the murder of King Abdullah in terms of its duration and achievements. What stands out as most momentous during King Hussein's reign was the March 1, 1956 decision to Arabise the Jordanian Armed Forces and free the country completely from the yoke of British colonialism. The results of this historic step came in fact and culminated in the March 13, 1957 decision to terminate the British-Jordanian Treaty.

The 1988 decision to break all legal and administrative relations with the West Bank in a bid to strengthen the Palestinian role in the determination of their future came as a natural development in the Jordanian-Palestinian relations that spanned several decades of joint effort.

State-building, though, continued on all fronts unabated ever since and has been marked by determination to spawn new roots for democracy and pluralism. The Nov. 8, 1989 general elections crowned the beginning of the new democratisation process and with it came the first Parliamentary elections after a hiatus of more than two decades. The adoption of the National Charter on June 9, 1991 came to reflect the Kingdom's determination to consolidate democracy on the basis of law and commitment to ensuring the country's progress and stability.

Other important milestones on the long road of democratisation included in the adoption of new laws that allowed for more freedom in the exercise of democracy and ensured respect for human rights.

On the external front, there is no doubt that the ratification of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty on Nov. 17, 1994 remained as the most eventful development whose impact has yet to be fully measured.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the Kingdom's independence we have many reasons to not only appreciate all past milestones during the country's relatively short history but also justifications for deeper reflection on our course whether on the domestic or foreign fronts. There were many things that we as a country and people have done right thus far. By the same token there were mistakes.

What is most important is that this country is well ahead of what anybody might have expected for it. True, much more needs to be done in order to receive the next century and millennium with confidence. What has to be recognised today, though, is that we have come a long way towards modernisation and true development. And we can be proud of what we have achieved.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE OIL-for-food deal between the U.N. and Iraq has been hailed by various nations and organisations as a move to help alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people, but it is not enough and there is need for lifting all the sanctions if the Iraqis are to enjoy security and normal life, said Youssef Damra, a writer for Al Ra'i daily. By welcoming the deal, the world implicitly admits that the sanctions have caused untold sufferings to the Iraqi people, causing thousands of deaths of innocent civilians, said the writer. If the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a crime, the way to punish it should not have been through committing an even more dastard crime, he added. By welcoming the deal, the world community is trying to rid itself from the feeling of guilt of subjecting the Iraqi nation to misery for six years, continued the writer. Since the partial lifting of the sanctions can not meet all the Iraqi people's requirements for life, there is urgent need for the world community to end the sanctions altogether, he demanded. The writer said that the Arab countries should take the lead for ending the unjust embargo on the Iraqis who never hesitated to lend support and backing for the other Arab states in times of need.

Jordanian Perspective

Reasons to rejoice on Independence Day

By Dr. Musa Keilani

AS WE celebrate our 50th Independence Day today, we as Jordanians have more than enough reason to be proud of our country and its leadership. From the day the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was founded, it has been a strong factor in maintaining stability in the troubled Middle East.

Indeed, we have had our share of problems, some of them so serious that they threatened the very survival of Jordan among giant neighbours, but our leadership, through wisdom and vision, steered us clear despite the immensity of the challenges.

Today, Jordan, despite its small geographical size and limited material resources, stands tall in the international community. The role Jordan is playing in the Middle East today is far larger than what many would perceive it to be in terms of its size and resources. But it should not be overlooked that size and resources are not necessarily the factors that determine any country's political role. Rather, such a role is determined by the country's political course and commitment to international principles. The consistent praise and respect that Jordan commands today in any part of the world did not come out of a vacuum. It is the result of laborious, patient diplomacy rooted in moderation, commitment to dialogue as a means to resolve problems, non-interference in others' internal affairs, and, above all, adherence to the principle of peace as a way of life.

Today, whenever the issue of peace and maintaining peace in any part of the world is raised at the international level, Jordan's name becomes part of those discussions at

some point if only because of the Kingdom's record as a source of inspiration for peace and its contribution to international peacekeeping.

At the regional level, Jordan's record as a democracy stands out. It may not be what some see as the ideal model of democracy as practised in the West, but then Jordan is not a Western country and the parameters that apply to the West do not necessarily apply to Jordan. We are proud of our democratic achievements, and we are in the process of institutionalising democracy. And that is a lot to say, especially when we compare ourselves with some of our neighbours. In fact, Jordan is a model for the region to emulate.

The peace treaty that Jordan signed with Israel in October 1994 was not simply a document that ended hostilities between the two countries. By entering the treaty, Jordan established the eastern borders of the state of Israel and eliminated decades-old fears of Israeli expansionism. It was also historic in that it was the first time that any border of Israel was determined after the creation of the Jewish state in 1948. As such, the peace treaty, beyond what it means on the internal front in Jordan, is a Jordanian achievement for the Arab World. We are aware that some may not accept it as such, but we are long used to scepticism rooted in self-oriented policies and narrow visions.

For us in Jordan, the peace treaty with Israel crowned the efforts of the late King Abdullah to defend and protect the Jordanian identity.

There are indeed some sore points as we celebrate our Independence Day. Foremost among them is the slow pace

in realising the dividends of peace. Complaints that Jordan "got very little" from making peace with Israel are often heard these days. Regardless of the validity or non-validity of that argument, the fact remains that peace in itself is a major gain for all of us and it is largely up to ourselves to consolidate and build on that peace so that its fruits can reflect on our daily life. There are no overnight solutions to our problems of poverty and unemployment, and we simply cannot expect the international community to pump in huge aid into our economy that would help these problems be solved.

We have seen enough evidence of strong willingness on the part of our friends to help us overcome these problems, but not through giving us large chunks of financial assistance. Solutions to these problems could come only through hard work that will modernise Jordan and uplift the Kingdom from the quagmire resulting from conventions and traditions that do not fit in with the requirements of the newly emerging international order. We have made of the newly emerging international order, as is evidenced in our ongoing efforts to bring about structural reforms in our economy, our quest to forge a partnership agreement with the European Union and our eventual entry into the World Trade Organisation.

As we congratulate our leadership and ourselves on the occasion of the Independence Day, we also remind ourselves that hard work lies ahead; but we Jordanians are not daunted by the challenge. Our history is not simply one of survival but of dignifying that survival with respect and commitment. We cannot afford to fail and we will not fail.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

'The Baghdad-U.N. deal is a major event in the lives of the Iraqis'

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

THE JORDANIAN dailies last week discussed the oil-for-food deal between the U.N. and Iraq, Israel's coming elections, the peace process, pan-Arab affairs and domestic issues.

Now that Iraq is to sell oil to buy food and medicine, in accordance with the Baghdad-U.N. deal, the real danger facing the lives of 18 million people is bound to diminish, said Sultan Al Hattab, a columnist for Al Ra'i daily.

Although the deal came late for thousands who perished due to lack of basic food supplies and medicine, it is considered a major event in the lives of the Iraqi people who have been deprived of normal life for many years, he added.

It is important for the Iraqi leadership to reconsider its policies for the coming era and work hard towards totally ending the sanctions as soon as possible, said the writer. He said the Arab countries should reconsider their positions towards Baghdad in light of the Iraqi regime's actions in the coming stage.

Hailing the oil-for-food deal between Baghdad and the U.N., Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the deal marks the beginning of the end of the Iraqi people's sufferings and the end of injustice done to the Iraqi nation. It is not in the interest of any Arab country now to remain hostile to the Baghdad regime and to continue supporting the U.S. and British stands with regard to the U.N.-imposed sanctions, said the writer.

The Iraqis constitute an important part of the Arab Nation and it is the Arab countries' duty to help end the injustice facing the Iraqi people that has caused so much damage to Iraq and the death of thousands of its children, said the writer.

He said that major world nations and even Israel have welcomed the move and therefore the Arabs are duty-bound not only to welcome the development but also to move ahead and terminate the embargo altogether.

Commenting on the ongoing Israeli parliamentary elections campaigns, Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that should Peres win, matters would not be any brighter than they are now for the future of the peace process.

After his reelection, Shimon Peres would not

speed up the peace process with the Palestinians, would show more arrogance before the world, would try to isolate Syria and escalate tension with Iran and would delay the implementation of the Oslo agreements, predicted the writer.

He said Mr. Peres would pursue the present policies especially if the Arab countries continue to show indifference to the Israeli behaviour.

The writer said the situation would be much worse under the Likud Party which openly insists on a war-like situation with the Arab World.

Contrary to this view, Saleh Qallab, a writer for Al Dustour, announced that it would be far better for the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular if Mr. Peres and his Labour Party win the coming elections.

As it is well known to all that the Palestine issue lies at the heart of the Israeli Arab conflict, one has to consider the different attitudes of the Labour and Likud towards the Palestine problem, said the writer.

He said that while the Labour Party in Israel had declared that it would not object to the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Likud does not admit that the Palestinians even exist in Palestine and suggests that they create a nation of their own in Jordan. Therefore, he said, it is in the interest of Jordan and the Palestinians alike to see Mr. Peres and the Labour Party reelected for a new term.

Ahmad Misleh, a writer for Al Ra'i, considered the statements of the leaders of both the Labour and the Likud parties of Israel in the current election campaign as manifesting hostility towards the Arabs.

The question of the future of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese lands is being debated in the campaign, with the leaders of the two parties outbidding each other in showing determination to keep the occupied territories under Israeli rule, said the writer.

The two parties are committing themselves to the promises in these statements and they are influencing the thoughts of the man in the street, added the writer. Therefore, he said, the Arabs expect the winning party to carry out its promised programme and keep the region in turmoil.

Describing the Israeli-Jordanian peace as cool and on the retreat rather than progressing, Sultan Al Hattab said that Israel

is to blame because it has been placing one obstacle after another in the path of peace.

The Jordanian ambassador to Israel, Omar Rifai, is to be commended for candidly expressing the reason behind the cool Israeli-Jordanian ties, which, according to him, are so because of Israel's continued siege of the Palestinian territories and due to its latest aggression on Lebanon.

Of course Jordan would like to see the peace process progressing unimpeded, but it should be helped by all concerned parties in the region including Israel, said the writer.

He said that Mr. Peres should take a clear stand before the elections and end his hesitation with regard to his party's policies towards the Palestinians and their future.

He said there can be no alternative to recognising the Palestinian rights in full if peace is to warm up between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Discussing the Arab-Turkish relations, a writer for Al Dustour said that Turkey, which had entered the Arab World under the umbrella of religion more than four centuries ago, is trying to make a return by means of water and find a way to restore its influence in the Arab region.

Mohammad Subeishi said that while Turkey is escalating tension in relations with Iraq and Syria over the river water issue, Jordan is trying to mediate and find a formula acceptable to both sides.

The Kingdom, said the writer, cannot remain neutral in the face of the looming danger and therefore finds itself forced to intervene to settle the issue, drawing on its strong ties with Ankara.

He said that while Jordan is making these peaceful moves, Israel is trying to bolster its ties with Turkey through a military deal in order to fuel Ankara's hostility towards the Arab World.

Unless the government takes very drastic measures with regard to the water question in Jordan and ensures a fair distribution of water supplies to all regions, the water problem is bound to aggravate, said a writer for Al Ra'i daily.

Sultan Al Hattab said that the government must seize all privately owned arsanian wells and must carry out a water rationing programme and take other practical steps to ensure that the scarce water resources are well managed and distributed.

He said it is also expected that the government would ensure continued supplies from Israel, as provided for in the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, to meet the growing demands of water in Jordan.

'Oil-for-food deal — an act of desperation rather than of statesmanship'

By Michael Jansen

IRAQ'S SIGNATURE on Monday's oil-for-food agreement with the U.N. was an act of desperation rather than of statesmanship. Nevertheless, ordinary Iraqis poured into the streets to celebrate and the Iraqi negotiator Dr. Abdul Amir Al Anbari described the plan as "perfect" and a "first step" towards the lifting of sanctions. But it was nothing to celebrate and certainly not a "step" in the direction of easing the U.N. sanctions regime.

It was an act of desperation because the Iraqi government could no longer put its citizens at risk of death from starvation or from lack of medicines because the Security Council, under U.S. pressure, refuses to reduce or lift the punitive sanctions regime imposed in August 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Half a million Iraqi children have died and another three million are suffering from malnutrition because of sanctions while the ill and the elderly lack medications to cure or prolong life. Diseases like polio have reemerged because there are no vaccines and hospitals lack the spare parts for the most basic medical equipment. There are no chemicals for water purification and no parts to repair pumps and purification equipment.

From being a country with a "First World" standard of living and health care, Iraq has sunk to the level of the most backward of Third World nations.

Those promoting the oil-for-food deal claim that Iraq will sell oil to the value of \$2 billion within six months and with the proceeds buy desperately needed food and medical supplies. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Of the \$2 billion earned by oil exports, 30 per cent will be handed over to the U.N. for payment of war reparations, 10 per cent is earmarked for the rebel Iraqi Kurds living in the Western-protected "safe haven" and another 10 per cent will be to meet U.N. expenses. This will leave Baghdad with \$1 billion to feed and meet the medical needs of its population for six months; \$2 billion a year in comparison with earnings of \$16 billion a year before the 1991 Gulf war. Then Iraq could afford to purchase two-thirds of its food requirements abroad and spent \$500 million a year on medical supplies. \$2

billion a year net will provide a sufficiency in medicines, but the Iraqis will have to continue tightening their belts because of lack of nourishment.

It would seem, however, that the \$2 billion a year is enough to save the guilty conscience of some humanitarians at the U.N. and the uneasiness over the continuation of sanctions felt in France, Russia and China, members of the U.N. Security Council who have pressed for easing or lifting of the regime. And for a meagre \$2 billion a year, the U.S. and Britain can count on support for the indefinite continuation of a sanctions regime designed not only to compel Iraq to disclose and destroy its weapons of mass destruction but also to deny economic redevelopment to the "Land of the Two Rivers".

The oil-for-food regime set out in Monday's "memorandum of understanding" is one of the most intrusive ever devised to punish a country already defeated in war. Although the agreement asserts that "nothing should be construed as infringing upon the sovereignty or territorial integrity of Iraq," we plan then outlines precisely how Iraq is to be subjected to such infringement.

The Iraqi government is, nominally, in charge of oil exports, for making deals and deliveries, and for the purchase and distribution of supplies. Only nominally, for at every step and every stage, Iraq is subjected to the close scrutiny of the Security Council committee in charge of the sanctions regime of its agents, a multitude of inspectors, experts and representatives for whom Iraq must pay out of its earnings (further depriving the population of the supplies they need).

The revenues gained from oil sales are to be deposited in a U.N. Iraq bank account, supervised by U.N.-appointed accountants and auditors. The oil must be shipped through Turkey, in order to give Ankara an income from transit dues, as well as the Iraqi terminal at Mina Al Bakr on the Gulf. Iraq requested the reopening of the Syrian pipeline so this could be a third route for exports but this was not agreed.

Inspectors and observers will be stationed everywhere along the route for distributing foodstuffs and medical supplies, although over the past five and a half

years the Iraqi government has demonstrated the efficiency and fairness of its rationing and distribution programme.

By insuring the separate distribution of supplies in the three northern governorates, and putting this in charge of the U.N. Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme instead of Iraqi government agencies, the U.N. has solidified the de facto partition of the country secured with the Western powers called the Kurdish "safe zone" in March 1991.

The worse aspect of this deal is the ceding of control to the U.N. committee — essentially the Security Council — which has, in the five and a half years of the sanctions regime, interpreted its mandate to suit the political interests of the U.S. and Britain, which remain determined to "contain" Iraq and topple President Saddam Hussein. Thus, Iraq has been denied basic supplies because the committee regards such things as X-ray plates, chlorine for water purification and chemicals for producing fertilisers as potential war material.

Furthermore, the committee makes a practice of procrastinating over permissions for imports, delaying shipments of urgently needed goods and supplies. And the committee has, on many occasions, denied Iraq certain essential supplies — such as tinned milk donated by American farmers. Under the domination of American and British diplomats and technocrats, the committee can be expected to make a mockery of the provisions of the sanctions resolution which state clearly that nothing should be done to prevent shipments of food and medical supplies.

The oil-for-food plan must be considered a integral part of the sanctions regime, a means to punish Iraq and its people. For this plan can only raise popular expectations of a dramatic improvement in living conditions, an improvement \$2 billion a year cannot effect. This could be why the U.S. and Britain have pressed so hard for Iraq to accept the deal. Because dashing expectations can only create despair amongst Iraqis and, perhaps, compel some brave souls to try and overthrow their government, the short, medium and long-term objective of Washington and London.

Jordan looks to business revival with Iraq after deal with United Nations

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordanian business has given a warm welcome to the oil-for-food deal between Iraq and the United Nations, looking forward to a revival of a once flourishing trade with Baghdad.

"This agreement opens new horizons in the development of business with Iraq," said Haidar Murad, president of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce.

"We will be only too pleased to meet a delegation of Iraq's chambers of commerce and industry to reinforce cooperation after this positive development," added Khalidun Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry.

A high-level Iraqi business delegation is expected in Amman on Sunday, for Jordan's annual trade fair.

In 1995, Jordan exported goods worth \$269 million to Iraq and imported \$445 mil-

lion worth from Iraq, a large slice of the Kingdom's oil needs.

Since the U.N. sanctions were imposed on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Jordan has been the only country authorised to buy oil from Iraq, to the tune of 3.2 million tonnes a year, to pay off Baghdad's debts.

Because of the sanctions, including an air traffic ban, the Baghdad-Amman road has been Iraq's outlet to the world.

"The transport sector and the port of Aqaba are ready to cope with a rise in the volume of imports for Iraq," said Transport Minister Nasser Lawzi. From Aqaba, unloaded goods are trucked to Iraq.

Maritime agent Tawfik Kassar said the U.N.-Iraq deal signed Monday in New York would kickstart the Red Sea port of Aqaba which has been badly hit by the six-year embargo on Iraq.

In 1990, Aqaba handled 70 per cent of Iraq's imports — 6.6 million tonnes out of a total of 7.7 million tonnes of goods unloaded.

Under the oil-for-food deal, Iraq will be allowed to export \$2 billion of oil every six months under strict U.N. control to buy much-needed food and medicines.

Among the other industries hoping to benefit from the easing of sanctions is Jordan's pharmaceutical sector.

Samih Darwazah, a major investor in the sector, said he expected exports of Jordanian pharmaceuticals to jump four-fold on the back of the agreement with the United Nations.

He said annual exports of medicines to Iraq could rise from the current level of \$13 million to \$60 million, equivalent to half of Jordan's annual pharmaceutical exports of \$123 million.

Foreign firms lining up for business with Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's food-for-oil deal with the United Nations is bound to intensify the race by foreign firms to explore business opportunities with Baghdad, diplomats have said.

The deal, signed by Iraq and the U.N. Monday, allows Baghdad partial oil sales worth \$2 billion in six months to buy food, medicine and other urgent civilian supplies.

For the humanitarian supplies, Iraq will have at least \$1.2 billion at its disposal after channelling 30 per cent of sales money to a U.N. reparations fund to compensate for the 1991 Gulf war victims and other U.N. costs.

"The money is enough to persuade businessmen to increase their trips to Baghdad in order to snatch whatever (opportunity) is available," one diplomat said.

Two groups of Egyptian and Moroccan businessmen are currently in Baghdad and their aim, according to official newspaper reports, is to sign deals to supply Iraq with food, medicine and other civilian needs.

Other businessmen have kept high-level but discrete contacts with Iraqi officials during the nearly six-years of blockade.

In the forefront, diplomats said, were French firms which first made covert contacts which then became more open when their government publicly declared its backing of a quick easing or lifting of sanctions on Iraq.

French businessmen and industrialists, most favoured by the authorities, have visited Iraq over the past two years.

"France generally has been pro-Iraq when it comes to sanctions especially under (President Jacques) Chirac. Under his administration a powerful Iraq lobby grew comprising corporate directors and senior retired officials," a European diplomat said.

in Baghdad said. Iraqi officials have repeatedly made clear that the policies of a company's government will be taken into account in granting deals and concessions.

Diplomats said so far France and to a lesser degree Russia, also sympathetic to Iraq on sanctions, have emerged as main winners.

Negotiations with the two countries for future development of Iraq's oil industry and giant oil field have reached an advanced stage. France's oil giants Total S.A. and Elf Aquitaine have reopened their offices in Baghdad and diplomats said Russia's N.K. Lukoil will soon follow suit.

Diplomats estimate that more than 40 French companies have visited Iraq, among them leading firms like Gaz de France, Citroen, Renault and Electricite de France to discuss post-sanctions business opportunities.

The Italians are also frequent visitors. Italy's oil firms like AGIP, Saipem and Technipetrol, which played a role in Iraq's oil industry prior to the sanctions, are also well placed to win future deals.

One diplomat said both Elf and Total were likely to lift Iraqi crude exports whenever they became available. "Such arrangements will spare Iraq the trouble of looking for customers which may be hard to win back in a glutted market."

The diplomat said otherwise it would be an uphill battle for Iraq to restore former positions in the oil market, even when exporting the limited amounts under the oil-for-food deal.

"The market is mostly under the control of diarch enemies like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait. None would like to see Iraq setting firm foot in market again," he said.

Official newspapers said

Iraq's ports and jetties were ready to receive commercial vessels and large oil tankers.

However, foreign firms eager to buy Iraq's oil are taking a cautious look at Iraqi ports which were battered by allied warplanes in the Gulf war and have not been used for exports for almost six years, industry executives have said.

Under the oil-for-food deal agreed by Baghdad and the United Nations, Iraq will be allowed to export oil from the Mina Al Bakr terminal to lucrative Asian markets, particularly Japan.

Mina Al Bakr, 19 kilometres off the southern Fao peninsula, was probably operational but firms would still want assurances that the channels leading to the terminal were safe from sunken tankers and mines, shipping sources in the region said.

One shipper said that there were at least three damaged vessels, including a very large crude carrier (VLCC), around Mina Al Bakr and there would have to be guarantees from Baghdad that the vessels were firmly anchored and did not pose a threat to tanker traffic.

Though most of the expected 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) of Iraqi exports will reach Western markets through a pipeline linked to Ceyhan on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, Mina Al Bakr will become a key marketing outlet for Iraq and a demonstration that Baghdad is once again a force in world oil markets.

"When you see tankers loading at Mina Al Bakr it means Iraq is back. The message to other producers couldn't be clearer," one western executive, who declined to be named, said.

The key OPEC Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran,

United Arab Emirates and Qatar have been able to increase their exports since Iraq's exports were cut off by U.N. sanctions.

All have taken a slice of Iraq's Far East and Asian markets which used to absorb 370,000 bpd of Iraqi oil.

Iraq, which has the world's second largest proven oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, says that Mina Al Bakr has been restored after suffering damage in the 1991 Gulf war.

Chief Iraqi negotiator at the U.N. oil talks, Abdul Amir Al Anbari, told the international newspaper Al Hayat the port's export capacity was between 700,000-800,000 bpd.

Iraqi officials have said Al Bakr's berths are ready to load tankers and underwent operational tests in February while the State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO) has sent faxes to potential customers that Al Bakr will be able to export its Basrah light and possibly Fao blend crude grades.

But firms interested in taking tankers to the deep-water loading terminal are taking a cautious approach, noting that the terminal has not been used to export oil since 1990.

Ships arrested in the Gulf by allied naval forces for breaking U.N. sanctions came mostly from the smaller Iraqi port of Al Zubair.

"SOMO has not given us any information on the ports as yet," a Japanese oil executive based in the UAE said.

Other sources of international firms in the region said that it would be likely that Iraq would first export oil through Turkey and then gradually begin Mina Al Bakr operations.

"They can ship from that port maybe by the end of this

year... exports will probably start on the Turkish side," a trader at a Japanese company which is interested in renewing its commercial ties with SOMO said.

Iraq is permitted to export oil products under the U.N. deal which prior to 1990 were sold from Al Zubair and Umm Qasr ports south of Basra and by shuttle vessels to Jebel Ali in the UAE.

Iraq News Agency said Thursday that Umm Qasr and Al Zubair were ready to receive shipping and that dozens of ships had been removed from canals leading to the ports.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MAY 25, 1996

By Thomas S. Plerson, Astrologer, Carroll Right Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Focus your attention on improving conditions around you today and you will get the good results which you desire at this time. Take time for a little fun tonight with your loved ones and close friends whom wish to see.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Utilise your talents in such a way today that you can realise more satisfaction and profit from them in the days ahead. Later tonight will be a good time for you to go out on the town or just with your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 20) Early morning today betrays an organisation of your career activities can bring greater success for you instead of suffering any losses. Let some exercise during our spare time later tonight and you will feel better to tackle any obstacles.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Place yourself in the hands of experts today and improve your appearance so that everyone who sees you will get the impression of your success. Drive carefully while on the highway and keep belongings safe from thieves.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Keep poised at home today, otherwise you could easily blow your top at the drop of a hat which would not be advisable, especially around those who have your success in their hands. Make sure all fixtures are working right.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Seek out the data your living more prosperous today, and put aside usual weekend career activities. Later tonight you can continue the tasks you have been putting off the sometime and get them completed.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day today to handle all money matters in a wise manner and get the results which you are expecting. Try to set up a budget, so that you will be able to keep track of all your income and expenses.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Concentrate on your finest personal needs and desires today and get your life arranged more wisely, so that you can get the attention of those in authority. Tonight will be good for you to see close friends and have some fun times.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get at all that multitude of small duties you have to attend today, and then you can have some free time to plan more important activities which have been put on the back burner. You will be able to catch up on some rest.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take care you don't neglect one today who is important in your life while you are concerned about getting ahead yourself or you could find that you have fallen several steps behind. Show some affection for your mate at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Know what it is that others expect of you in the business world today and then handle such matter with as much efficiency as you possibly can. This is a good day to ask a favor from some expert in the field.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are interested in new outlets of success and this is a good day today to look into them and know which are best for you to accept. Later tonight you can be seen out on the town with some close friends for some fun.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

OECD countries renew support for world trade system, global dialogue

PARIS (AFP) — OECD member countries have pledged to avoid recourse to trade and investment measures running against the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and to resist protectionist pressures.

In a communique issued at the end of the annual ministerial meeting of the 27-nation Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), participants outlined an "action plan" for sustainable growth and job creation that broke no new ground.

They also set out an agenda for work towards further trade liberalisation, outlined ways to build closer ties between the OECD and non-member economies, including new major players in the world economy, and planned new basic orientations for the OECD's

future role and work.

Member countries papered over differences with the United States over U.S. sanctions against foreign companies trading with Cuba in the wake of the downing of aircraft piloted by U.S.-based Cuban exiles.

Chief U.S. delegate Joe Stiglitz told reporters: "It would have been better if some of the energy spent on criticising our position was spent on criticising international terrorism," which "would have been a better target."

In a strenuously negotiated compromise text on this point, OECD ministers undertook to work to "strengthen the confidence in and the credibility of the multilateral trading system by avoiding taking trade and investment measures that would be in contradiction

with (WTO) rules and OECD codes."

They were also committed to "using and complying with any applicable provisions for consultation and dispute settlement when differences arise."

The ministers, who pledged to resist "all forms of protectionist pressure," also undertook to "work for a successful first WTO ministerial conference" in Singapore next December.

They would do so "to consolidate and build on the momentum" of the Uruguay Round world trade pact signed two years ago at Marrakesh, Morocco, "through a balanced, consensual agenda reflecting the interests of all WTO members, including developing and transition economies."

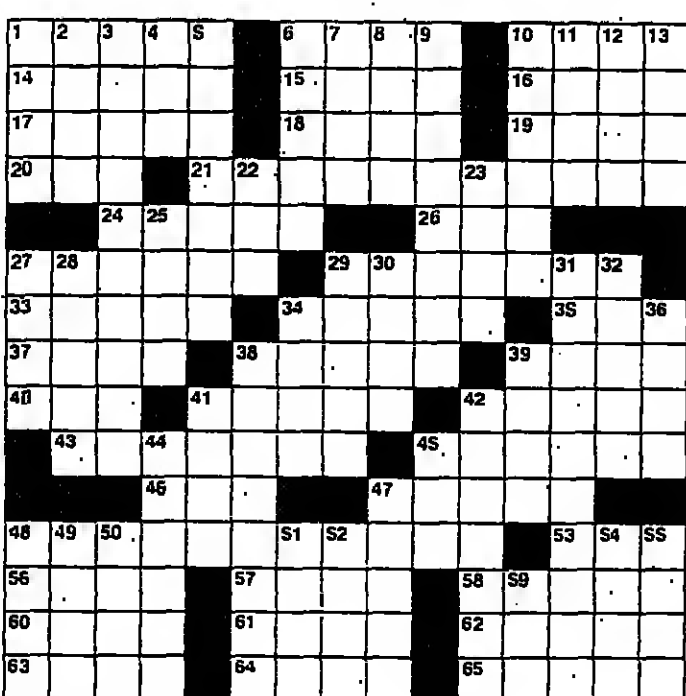
THE Daily Crossword by CF Murray

ACROSS

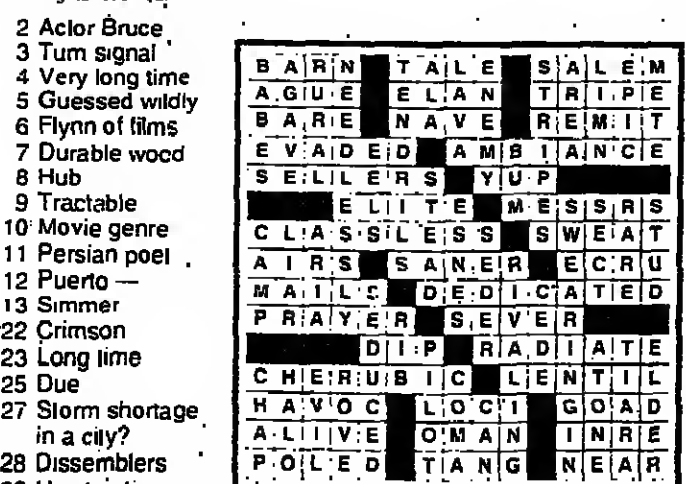
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- 41 Root features
- 42 Test the truth
- 43 Did a cashless deal
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- 56 Substantial lot?
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DOWN

- 1 Joie de vivre



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- 10 Movie genre
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- 27 Storm shortage in a city?
- 28 Dissemblers
- 29 Used a dipper
- 30 Woos
- 31 Lewis character
- 32 Permission
- 34 Own
- 36 Touch
- 38 Having flaps, as headgear
- 39 Steel base
- 41 Monumental
- 42 Gifted ability
- 44 Check
- 45 Overly
- 47 Old English coin
- 48 Long eagerly
- 49 Champagne buckel
- 50 Gaelic
- 51 Guthrie
- 52 Streamel
- 54 Before: pref.
- 55 British slammer
- 59 Corner's letters

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



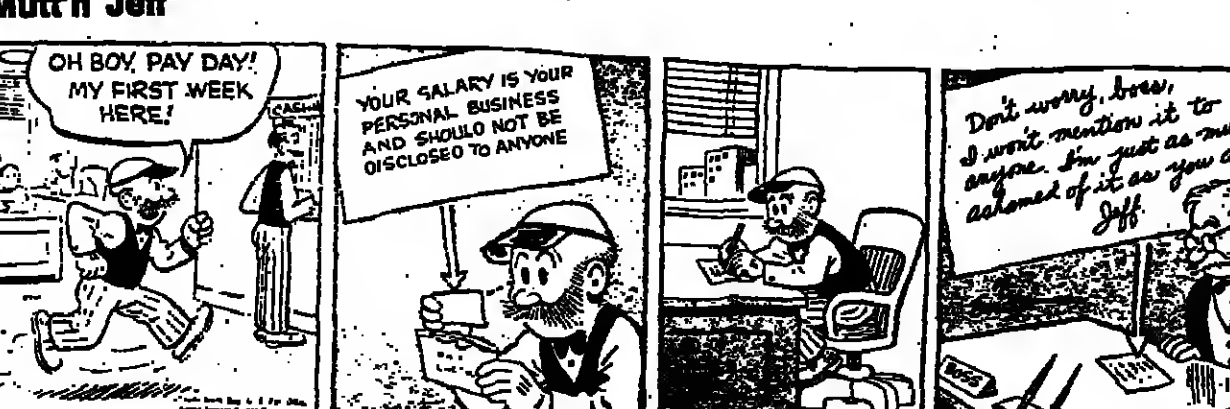
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| WEEKLY REPORT | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DATE | COMPANY NAME | P/R | DIV | NO. OF CONTRACTS | NO. OF SHARES | VALUE TRADED JD | OPENING PRICE | HIGH | LOW | CLOSING PRICE | AVERAGE PRICE |
| 25.5.96 | 224.000 ARAB BANK | 12.4 | 1.55 | 14 | 1280 | 209410 | 774.50 | 774.50 | 774.50 | 774.50 | 774.50 |
| 4.400 | 4.400 JUBA NATIONAL BK. | 12.7 | 9.10 | 20 | 34544 | 157109 | 4.41 | 4.43 | 4.43 | 4.43 | 4.43 |
| 1.550 | 1.550 GABRIEL ARAB BANK | 11.2 | 2.17 | 8 | 20722 | 75732 | 4.40 | 4.40 | 4.40 | 4.40 | 4.40 |
| 1.110 | 1.110 BANK OF JORDAN | 12.1 | 0.00 | 6 | 1944 | 4621 | 3.25 | 3.41 | 3.41 | 3.41 | 3.41 |
| 3.470 | 3.470 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 12.0 | 0.00 | 6 | 6900 | 4213 | 1.11 | 1.07 | 1.04 | 1.05 | 1.05 |
| 4.600 | 4.600 THE JORDANIAN BANK | 15.3 | 3.20 | 8 | 1820 | 16855 | 7.80 | 8.83 | 8.77 | 8.80 | 8.78 |
| 2.890 | 2.890 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 20.3 | 0.00 | 21 | 5094 | 14905 | 6.52 | 4.31 | 4.31 | 4.31 | 4.31 |
| 1.090 | 1.090 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 5.8 | 7.22 | 75 | 97400 | 85714 | 1.03 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 |
| 5.640 | 5.640 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 10.1 | 0.00 | 67 | 13044 | 58214 | 4.00 | 4.20 | 4.37 | 4.39 | 4.39 |
| 1.580 | 1.580 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 19.3 | 0.00 | 7 | 2275 | 4999 | 2.72 | 2.22 | 2.19 | 2.19 | 2.19 |
| 2.720 | 2.720 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 19.2 | 0.00 | 2 | 6200 | 22100 | 1.54 | 3.55 | 3.52 | 3.55 | 3.52 |
| 5.60 | 5.60 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 1.7 | 0.00 | 33 | 9647 | 35727 | 2.72 | 2.81 | 2.76 | 2.76 | 2.76 |
| 6.900 | 6.900 ARAB BANKING CO. | 24.9 | 0.00 | 4 | 2504 | 30124 | 4.81 | 4.81 | 4.81 | 4.81 | 4.81 |
| 1.380 | 1.380 JUBA NATIONAL BANK | 0.00 | 0.00 | 62 | 30350 | 37460 | 1.23 | 1.23 | 1.23 | 1.23 | 1.23 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3207 2582179 2699980 INDEX NUMBER 1 171.13 CHANGE 1 0.384 | | | | | | | | | | | |

OECD

(Continued from page 8)

The ministers also committed themselves to concluding negotiations in the OECD on a multilateral investment agreement (MAI) by the time of next year's OECD ministerial meeting, "with high standards of investment liberalisation and protection and effective dispute settlement procedures."

They specifically agreed to "engage in an intensified dialogue" with non-OECD countries, "in particular those interested in acceding to the MAI."

On specific trade-related issues, the ministers agreed to "further work for liberalising ... international air transport within bilateral and multilateral frameworks."

They also undertook to reexamine the "tax deductibility of bribes to foreign public officials ... and criminalisation of bribery" in order to combat such practices in international business transactions.

The ministers vowed to "continue working for the promotion of core labour standards around the world," calling for further discussions on this issue with dynamic non-member economies and other countries.

The statement mentioned "macro-economic policies ... (which) inflation at a low level and promote sustainable development."

The ministers agreed to "continue to fight unemployment as their most urgent challenge" and to "implement with firm determination" the recommendations of the OECD jobs strategy.

OECD countries agreed to "continue to cooperate on economic policies and exchange rates, thereby improving the fundamentals for sustained growth," the communiqué also said.

Economic objectives could be achieved by reducing fiscal deficits, "by limiting public expenditure where appropriate" and by pursuing "sound monetary policies" to promote price stability and create "a more favourable and predictable environment for investment and consumption decisions," it said.

The ministers did not immediately draw up any comprehensive new guidelines for the OECD's future work, but urged new secretary-general Donald Johnston, of Canada, to overhaul the organisation through "more stringent priority-setting" and by reforming management and working methods.

On a proposal by Japan, they urged him to call an early "special council meeting" to "consider the organisation's budgetary situation and prospects."

DAILY BUSINESS

Economists see U.N.-Iraq deal accelerating Jordanian economic activity

★ THE OIL-FOR-FOOD deal signed between Iraq and the U.N. is expected to accelerate the Jordanian economic activity by revitalising the trade movement between Jordan and Iraq, reviving the port of Aqaba and the transport sector in general and increasing the share trading performance at the Amman Financial Market. Many economists stress that Jordan stands to reap a lot of benefits if the concerned public and private sectors are quick to seize this opportunity and to follow it up at a fast pace with the Iraqis. They emphasise that Jordan, and especially Aqaba, would be the main beneficiary due to the deep ties between the two countries and to the advantage of their geographic closeness.

Economist and Former Labour Minister Tayseer Abdul Jaber said that "it is important now that the Jordanian officials open the stage to conduct wide negotiations with the Iraqi side to discuss the possibility of exporting any amount of oil that is allowed to the Palestinian territories through Jordan." According to Dr. Abdul Jaber, this would enable Iraq to settle even gradually, the debt that accumulated on it to the Kingdom. He indicated that the Jordanian, the private or public sectors should take the initiative and quickly respond to the Iraq-U.N. agreement. "There is no doubt that a better standard of living in Iraq as a result of the agreement would reflect positively on Jordan on condition that both the private and public sectors move to seize this opportunity, clarify the procedures and provide the foodstuffs that are allowed," he said.

"The private sector is required to benefit of the higher purchasing power for the Jordanian goods by exporting the products that are allowed to Iraq whether they originate in Jordan or through reexport," Dr. Abdul Jaber emphasised, noting that over the past years the Jordanian private sector had built strong ties with the Iraqis. He said that other countries, such as Syria and Turkey, would try to gain from the agreement but be expected an active role for Aqaba as it has been and still is the only outlet for Iraq.

Mohammad Saleh Jaber, another economist, saw the Jordanian market as the only one that will be able to satisfy the immediate needs of the Iraqi market as the Kingdom has large supplies of food and drugs. He indicated, however, that the most important result of the agreement would be the activation of the Aqaba port and the transport sector in general despite the fierce competition expected from many neighbouring countries. Another advantage seen by Dr. Jaber was in the revival of the stock exchange as Iraq would be large credits owed to many Jordanian companies.

Dr. Jaber urged the Jordanian diplomatic channels to play a major role now to intensify contacts with the Iraqis through organising visits and meetings between industrialists and businessmen from both sides (Al Dustour).

Financial Markets

| Currency | 1 MTH | 3 MTHS | 6 MTHS | 12 MTHS |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| U.S. Dollar | 5.18 | 5.25 | 5.31 | 5.50 |
| Sterling Pound | 5.81 | 5.81 | 5.81 | 6.12 |
| Deutsche Mark | 3.12 | 3.06 | 3.06 | 3.12 |
| Swiss Franc | 2.12 | 2.00 | 2.06 | 2.12 |
| French Franc | 3.56 | 3.56 | 3.68 | 3.81 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.25 | 0.38 | 0.44 | 0.69 |
| European Currency Unit | 4.37 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 4.31 |

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|----------------|--------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.0676 | 1.0720 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4584 | 0.4607 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.5580 | 0.5608 |
| French Franc | 0.1354 | 0.1361 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.6621 | 0.6654 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.4099 | 0.4119 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.0454 | 0.0456 |

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| Bahrein Dinar | 1.8620 | 1.8780 |
| Lebanese Lira | 0.044385 | 0.044925 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.1870 | 0.1895 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 2.3310 | 2.3670 |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.1932 | 0.1945 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.2100 | 0.2200 |
| Omani Riyal | 1.8330 | 1.8410 |
| UAE Dirham | 0.1922 | 0.1933 |
| Greek Drachma | 0.2765 | 0.3065 |
| Cypriot Pound | 1.4445 | 1.5050 |

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| One U.S. dollar | 1.3748/58 | Canadian dollar |
| | 1.5428/38 | Deutschemarks |
| | 1.7260/70 | Dutch guilders |
| | 1.2662/72 | Swiss francs |
| | 31.71/75 | Belgian francs |
| | 5.2207/57 | French francs |
| | 1561.3/2.8 | Italian lire |
| | 107.68/78 | Japanese yen |
| | 6.8400/00 | Swedish crowns |
| | 6.6050/00 | Norwegian crowns |
| | 5.9600/50 | Danish crowns |
| | 1.4100/10 | Singapore dollars |
| | 0.7916/21 | Australian dollars |
| | 7.7335/60 | Hong Kong dollars |
| One sterling | \$1.5114/24 | |
| Gold (ounce) | \$390.80/391.30 | |

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Juventus announce parting of ways with Vialli

ROME (R) — European Cup winners Juventus and their captain Gianluca Vialli are to part company. Just a few hours after the shaven-headed striker appeared on the front page of Italian newspapers holding the European Cup on Wednesday night, the Turin club announced the divorce.

Juventus, who beat Ajax Amsterdam on penalties in the final in Rome, said in a terse statement that the club "had decided by mutual consent not to renew the contract, considering the various, reciprocal demands."

The statement did not give any indication where Vialli was heading but sources close to the player have hinted that English Premier League club

Chelsea was the most likely destination.

Vialli, whose contract expires at the end of the season, has hinted at a possible sentimental return to Sampdoria where he played from 1984 to 1992 and won the league title in 1991. He has also been linked with Glasgow Rangers.

Club sources said Juventus had offered Vialli, who will be 32 in July, a one-year contract. The former Italian international had sought a two-year deal.

Vialli, a distinctive character with his shaven head and rapacious goalscoring instinct, has called a news conference in Turin on Friday afternoon to announce his plans.

His agent Claudio Pasquinelli said on Monday that

he could not rule out "stunning news" at the conference.

Vialli refused to comment on his future after the European Cup final, saying it was not the right time.

The split with Juventus crowned an eventful season for Vialli, who announced early on in the league campaign that he was retiring from the national team for as long as coach Arrigo Sacchi was in charge.

Vialli, an exuberant and independent-minded character, had clashed repeatedly with Sacchi and was outraged when the coach disclosed that he had asked other players whether Vialli should be called up.

Vialli was named player of the year in December in a poll of the readers of world soccer.

Juventus accomplish season ambition

ROME (API) — Juventus of Turin approached this season with a singular purpose: winning the European Champions Cup.

The Italians did just that Wednesday night, beating Ajax of Amsterdam in penalty kicks and beginning the start of what figures to be a breakup of the Dutch power.

Juventus won 4-2 on penalty kicks after regulation and overtime at Olympic stadium ended 1-1.

"I am really satisfied because we won playing a great match, from the technical and tactical point of view," Juventus coach Marcello Lippi said. "We merited victory in the regular 90 minutes. Victory came anyway, but we had to suffer."

The previous time Juventus won the Champions Cup was in 1985, a 1-0 victory over Liverpool that was preceded by a riot in which 39 fans died.

Ajax was bidding to become the first repeat winner of European soccer's most prestigious trophy since AC Milan in 1990.

Juventus lost to Ajax in the 1973 Champions Cup final, when the Dutch took the last of three straight titles.

Ajax has won three straight domestic league titles and the last two Dutch Cups with a stylish attacking style. But it was Juventus that dictated the tempo most of the way.

Juventus prevailed when Angelo Peruzzi, the goalkeeper on Italy's national team, saved shots by Ajax's Edgar Davids and Sonny Silvolty in the shootout. All four Juventus players came through, with Yugoslavian midfielder Vladimir Jugovic striking the clincher.

In regulation, Juventus opened the scoring in the 15th minute.



A fan tries to cheer up Dutch Ajax Amsterdam striker Patrick Kluyvert (left) as he signs his autograph on her hand upon his arrival at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, May 23. The Ajax Amsterdam soccer squad returned home from Rome where they lost the European Cup final match against Juventus (Reuters photo).

Ajax goalkeeper Edwin Van Der Sar and defender Frank De Boer crossed signals and failed to clear a loose ball. Fabrizio Ravancelli then went around the goalkeeper and sent a bouncing shot across the goal line from an extreme angle.

Ajax tied the score with four minutes left in the first half when Jari Litmanen scored after a rebound of a free kick by De Boer. The ball bounced off Ciro Ferrara to Litmanen, who scored his ninth goal, the most in this year's Champions Cup.

Juventus then wasted numerous opportunities, including at the end of regulation, when Michele

Padovano and Gianluca Vialli each missed twice.

Juventus, which features seven players of the Italian team for next month's European Championships, should stay intact with the exception of Vialli, the 31-year-old forward and captain.

Ajax, however, faces an exodus. Silvolty is headed for Germany while Davids, defender Michael Reiziger and Nigerian forward Nwankwo Kanu are bound for other Italian clubs.

Couch Louis Van Gaal and star striker Patrick Kluyvert, who scored when Ajax beat Milan 1-0 for the 1995 Cup, are both likely to leave when their contracts expire in 1997.

Shoulder injury forces Seles out of Spanish Open

MADRID (R) — A nagging shoulder injury has forced Monica Seles to withdraw from the Spanish Women's Open Tennis Tournament, organisers said on Friday.

Joint world No. 1 Seles, who played a three-set opening match on Wednesday and is due to play the French Open next week, told organisers she was afraid she had re-injured her left shoulder, which had been bothering her since she hurt it at the Australian Open in January.

"I knew coming into this tournament that my shoulder was not yet where I wanted it to be," Seles said.

"It really started bothering me (on Wednesday). I can play, but there is pain when I hit backhands and serving is still very difficult. I just hope it gets better in time for the French Open next week."

Doctors have diagnosed the problem as tendinitis in the American's left shoulder with a tear in the lining of the — socket.

Seles had an emotional European comeback on Wednesday, saving five matchpoints to beat Austrian Barbara Schett in her opening



Monica Seles

match here.

It was her first appearance on a European court since she was stabbed in the back by a spectator in Hamburg three

years ago.

The French Open, which the Yugoslav-born Seles has won three times, begins on Monday.

Barmby scores first goals as England outclass China

BEIJING (R) — Nick Barmby staked his claim for a place in England's Euro 96 line-up by scoring the first goals of his international career in a 3-0 win over China on Thursday.

Barmby, who has endured a miserable time at his Middlesbrough club in recent months, was awarded his first cap of the year as coach Terry Venables demonstrated his faith in his former Tottenham prodigy.

Paul Gascoigne set the seal on an assured and dominant England display with his first goal for his country in almost three years.

But the one disappointing note was that Alan Shearer, back after his groin operation, again failed to break his international scoring drought, which now spans 13 matches and 20 months.

While Shearer was left to wonder where his next England goal is coming from, Barmby's display lifted the clouds of uncertainty that have engulfed him.

Four months without a goal for his club brained his confidence, but from early on, encouraged by the midfield promptings of Gascoigne and former Spurs teammate Darren Anderton, Barmby looked the player for whom Bryan Robson splashed out £5.25 million (\$7.93 million) last summer.

With 30 minutes gone Anderton picked the ball up on the right, drifted off defender Ma Ming Yu and slid the ball between the Chinese central defenders.

Barmby's acceleration took him clear of China's top player, Fan Zhiyu, and while his instant right-footer smashed against the base of the upright, Barmby was first to react, sending a left-footer into the roof of the net.

While China made up in effort what they lacked in technique, England were very much in charge and any doubts were settled at the start of the second period.

In the 53rd minute, Anderton's cross found Gascoigne in the centre circle, and with the Chinese standing off, he flicked the ball into the box with the outside of his right foot.

Gascoigne netted in the 64th minute. Anderton's back-heel unhinged the Chinese defence, and while Barmby and Shearer had strayed offside, the flag was over-ruled and Gascoigne's arrogant finish fully deserved the extravagant celebrations marking his first goal since he scored in the World Cup qualifier against Poland in 1993.

Clemens gets hit in Red Sox win

BOSTON (R) — Roger Clemens threw a complete game and became the first Boston pitcher to get a hit since 1912 and Troy O'Leary homered and drove in four runs to lead the Red Sox to an 11-4 win over the Seattle Mariners Thursday.

Clemens (3-4) allowed four runs and nine hits with five strikeouts for his 96th career complete game and second this season. He also moved into a tie with Red Sox legend Luis Tiant for 24th on the all-time strikeout list with 2,416.

Left fielder Reggie Jefferson was lifted for a pinch-runner in the seventh and designated hitter Jose Canseco took his spot in the field, putting Clemens in the batting lineup in the eighth against hard-throwing norm Charlton.

Clemens fouled one off, took a strike and then slapped the 0-2 pitch up the middle for the first hit by a Red Sox pitcher since Tiant got one on October 3, 1972, the year before the designated hitter rule took effect in the American league.

"I didn't realise I was in the lineup, as far as hitting, until I saw (umpire) Derryl Cousins point at me and they announced it over the loudspeakers that I was hitting," Clemens said.

"Roger picked us up tonight as he always seems to do," said Boston manager Kevin Kennedy, who knows the dangers of asking a player to do something he isn't accustomed to. It was Kennedy who had Canseco pitch when they were both at Texas, blowing out Canseco's elbow.

"Sure, I had flashbacks to Canseco but I felt okay when Roger said he was friends with Charlton from Houston," said Kennedy. "I just told him to stand off the plate."

"If I'm Kennedy I don't do what he did," said Charlton. "Roger has got enough complete games. He doesn't have to worry about another one in his career."

"I gave him three pitches — all fastballs. I'm not going to throw anything but fastballs. If I can't get three fastballs by a pitcher, then I shouldn't be out there."

Boston's Tim Lollar got a hit as a pinch-hitter on August 12, 1986. Milwaukee's Matt Mays was the last American League pitcher to collect a hit, on August 24, 1993.

John Valentin homered in the first off loser Boh Milacki (1-1). Canseco hit his 11th homer in a four-run seventh, and Tim Lachring, who went 3-for-4, hit a two-run shot in the eighth for the final margin for Boston.

In Cleveland, Urel Hersheris bounced back from his worst start since joining the team a season ago and allowed one run over seven-plus innings as the Indians beat the Milwaukee Brewers 5-1 in the rubber game of their three-game series.

Hersheris (4-3), who allowed seven runs in three innings against Texas Friday,

retired the first 10 batters, only a solo homer by Jose Valentin tainted a seven-hit, two-walk performance.

"Tonight, I made better pitches and had better location," Hersheris said.

Valentin is 4-for-7 with three homers in his career against Hersheris.

Albert Belle and Manny Ramirez each had two hits and an RBI for Cleveland, which has won nine of its last 11 games.

Angel Miranda (3-3) had a two-game winning streak snapped.

In Kansas City, Kevin Appier scattered eight hits over 7 1/2 innings for his first win in three weeks and four starts, and Craig Paquette and Sal Fasano homered as the Royals defeated the Texas Rangers 4-2.

Appier (4-4) struck out seven and walked one. Jeff Montgomery got his 13th save as the Royals won their fourth straight. Darren Oliver (3-2) took the loss.

David Howard became the third royal this year to steal home.

In Toronto, pinch-hitter Charlie O'Brien's one-out single in the bottom of the 10th scored Felipe Crespo and lifted the Blue Jays past the Minnesota Twins 5-4.

Crespo was pinch-running for John Olerud, who led off the 10th with a single off reliever Mike Milchin (1-1). Olerud had homered in the fourth.

Rookie Marty Janzen (2-0) notched his second major-league win in as many appearances. He gave up one hit and struck out six in 4 2/3 scoreless innings of relief.

Paul Molitor received a standing ovation in his first return to Toronto since leaving the team for Minnesota. He went 0-for-5 for the twins, who got a homer from Roberto Kelly and have lost 10 of their last 13 games.

In New York, Wade Boggs's two-out RBI single in the eighth lifted the Yankees to a 4-3 win over the Oakland Athletics.



New York Yankees batter Ruben Rivera is hit by an eighth inning two-out pitch from Oakland A's pitcher Billy Taylor. Rivera managed to stay in the game and score the winning run as the Yankees won 4-3 May 23 at New York's Yankee Stadium (Reuters photo)

Albert Belle of the Cleveland Indians (right) reaches third base ahead of the tag applied by Milwaukee Brewers' third baseman Kevin Seitzer in the fifth inning at Jacobs Field May 23.



Albert Belle of the Cleveland Indians (right) reaches third base ahead of the tag applied by Milwaukee Brewers' third baseman Kevin Seitzer in the fifth inning at Jacobs Field May 23.

Boggs had been 1-for-15 with runners in scoring position and two outs before the game-winning hit. He got his seventh three-hit game of the season.

Kenny Rogers (3-0) pitched eight strong innings to earn his eighth straight win, dating back to last August 30 when he played for Texas. John Wetteland made his first appearance in 11 days and worked a hitless ninth for his eighth save.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

'Dahlin joins Roma'

ROME (R) — Swedish international striker Martin Dahlin has joined Roma from Borussia Moenchengladbach, a Roma official said on Thursday. The news agency ANSA quoted Mauro Miccio, press and communications officer at the Serie A club, as saying that the deal had been clinched on Wednesday. The Rome-based Corriere Dello sport daily newspaper reported earlier that Roma had offered 5.5 million marks for Dahlin and that he would sign a three-year contract paying him about \$600,000 per season.

Borg recovering after collapse

STOCKHOLM (R) — Five times Wimbledon champion Bjorn Borg was recovering at his parents' home in Sweden on Thursday after collapsing before a match in the Netherlands at the weekend. Borg, 41 next month, collapsed in the locker room in Nijmegen on Sunday as he was preparing to meet Argentina's Jose-Luis Clerc in a veterans tournament, Swedish tabloid Aftonbladet said. Tournament organisers said Borg had suffered an epileptic fit, but his mother, Margareta Borg, denied this. "It was not an epileptic seizure," she said. "We don't have the disease in our family, at least not as far as I know. He was in the hospital and had a series of tests. Everything is just fine." Borg, who arrived in Nijmegen direct from playing in Washington, said the collapse was due to exhaustion, the newspaper said. "Bjorn was simply suffering from pure exhaustion — he's had the flu and cold," his mother said.

Olympiakos coach resigns

ATHENS (R) — Yannis Ioannidis, the Greek coach who turned Olympiakos into one of the best basketball clubs in Europe, has resigned after an apparent clash with club owner Socrates Kokkalis. Ioannidis told a news conference he had informed Kokkalis of his

decision in a letter on May 2 and that Kokkalis had accepted his resignation on Tuesday. "I was the subject of a dirty war. It was an emotionally exhausting situation," Ioannidis said without elaborating. His resignation came three days after he led Olympiakos to their fourth straight Greek Championship, humiliating European champions Panathinaikos 73-38 in the final. Ioannidis led Olympiakos to two straight European clubs' basketball finals in 1994 and 1995 but failed both times to lift the trophy. He has won the Greek championship a record 12 times with Olympiakos and his former club Aris. Olympiakos did not qualify this season for Paris' final-four in April and Ioannidis's relations with Kokkalis have since been stormy. Serb national coach Dusan Ivkovic, now the coach of Greek club Panionios, and his compatriot Zeljko Obradovic of Real Madrid are favoured to succeed Ioannidis, club officials said.

Johnson pulls out of GP meeting

EUGENE (R) — World champion Michael Johnson, who hopes to become the first male to win both the 200 and 400 metres at the same Olympics, is slightly injured and will not run in this weekend's prefrontaine classic Grand Prix meeting, his agent said on Thursday. Brad Hunt said the injury, a soreness in Johnson's right hamstring, was not serious. "but since this is the Olympic year, you don't want to take any chances." Johnson had been scheduled to run the 400 metres in the meeting here on Sunday, but Hunt said Johnson was still sore from last weekend's Atlanta Grand Prix, where he defeated fellow American Michael Marsh in the men's 200 metres in 19.83 seconds, the year's fastest time. Hunt said Johnson's next race would be over 400 metres at Paris on June 3. He then will return to the United States to prepare for the U.S. Olympic trials, which begin June 14 in Atlanta's Olympic stadium.

STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Eastern Division

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|-----------|----|----|------|-------|
| New York | 26 | 17 | .605 | - |
| Baltimore | 25 | 19 | .568 | 1 1/2 |
| Toronto | 21 | 25 | .457 | 6 1/2 |
| Boston | 18 | 26 | .409 | 8 1/2 |
| Detroit | 12 | 35 | .255 | 16 |

Central Division

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Cleveland | 30 | 14 | .682 | - |
| Chicago | 26 | 18 | .591 | 4 |
| Milwaukee | 22 | 22 | .500 | 8 |
| Kansas City | 22 | 26 | .458 | 10 |
| Minnesota | 19 | 26 | .422 | 11 1/2 |

Western Division

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|------------|----|----|------|-------|
| Texas | 28 | 18 | .609 | - |
| Seattle | 24 | 21 | .533 | 3 1/2 |
| Oakland | 21 | 24 | .467 | 6 1/2 |
| California | 21 | 24 | .467 | 6 1/2 |

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Eastern Division

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|--------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Atlanta | 30 | 16 | .652 | - |
| Montreal | 29 | 18 | .617 | 1 1/2 |
| Florida | 24 | 24 | .500 | 7 |
| Philadelphia | 22 | 23 | .489 | 7 1/2 |
| New York | 19 | 26 | .422 | 10 1/2 |

Central Division

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|-------|
| San Diego | 29 | 18 | .617 | - |
| San Francisco | 24 | 21 | .533 | 4 |
| Los Angeles | 24 | 24 | .500 | 5 1/2 |
| Colorado | 22 | 22 | .500 | 5 1/2 |

Western Division

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Houston | 22 | 26 | .458 | - |
| Chicago | 21 | 26 | .447 | 1/2 |
| St. Louis | 20 | 26 | .435 | 1 |
| Cincinnati | 18 | 24 | .429 | 1 |
| Pittsburgh | 18 | 28 | .391 | 3 |

Smith, once fastest in world, tries to follow Lewis to Atlanta

MONTGOMERY, Alabama (AP) — Calvin Smith and Carl Lewis, who once duelled for the title of world's fastest man, haven't said much to each other over the years.

That hasn't changed now, even though both are trying for one more Olympic triumph at age 35.

During the 1980s, Smith could run 100 meters faster than anyone on earth. His world record of 9.93 stood from 1983 to 1987, when Canada's Ben Johnson broke it with a 9.83 at the World Championships in Rome.

Johnson lowered the mark to 9.79 at the Seoul Olympics in 1988, but Johnson was disqualified and his records nullified due to a positive steroid test. Lewis, second to

Johnson, got the gold medal and the new world record at 9.92. Smith moved up to take the bronze medal.

But while Lewis has kept going, most recently with a 9.93 at the Atlanta grand prix meet last weekend, Smith faded. He has been training while coaching track at his alma mater Alabama, and hopes to make the Atlanta games even though he hasn't broken 10 seconds in seven years.

"I can go out and retire this year without thinking I should have trained to try to make this team," Smith said. "I will know I gave my best all my years of competition."

One problem has been injuries. Various muscle

pains and cramps have slowed Smith in the last two years. Arkansas track coach Dick Booth, who is training another aging Olympian, long jumper Mike Conley, said staying healthy is the biggest challenge for someone of Smith's years.

"Those things don't go away overnight like they did when you were 19," Booth said.

It would be a brilliant finishing touch to his career, if Smith can pull it off. He faces the same critics who wondered if Lewis, at 35, would embarrass himself in Atlanta. Lewis, the king of track for a decade, put that idea to rest with some of his old magic last weekend.

While it might seem

logical for Lewis and Smith to compare notes and draw strength from each other, it's not happening, both are private men, and Smith has avoided public attention throughout his career.

Plus, running the fastest 100 metres in the world is one of the great quests in sports. Secrets and pleasures just aren't shared.

"We might speak to each other and then go on about our own ways," Smith said. "There are many sprinters I talk to a whole lot more. There's no animosity or anything like that between us."

Unlike Lewis, Smith hasn't proved anything yet, except that his desire is as strong as ever. Though he has been training and running with the Alabama

team, Smith has not made the top 10 in the world 100-meter rankings since 1993. Last year, his best time was 10.25, and he didn't make it out of the heats in the national championships.

Leroy Burrell is the current record holder at 9.85. Like Lewis, Smith scoffs at the pessimists.

"Most of the people who say that are not what you would call true athletes," Smith said. "They're probably out there wishing they could do it."

Smith doesn't see himself as a once-great athlete making one comeback too many.

"I am still Calvin Smith, one of the greatest sprinters that's been around," Smith said. "And is around."



King congratulates Faisali

Regent says team's achievement in Arab tournament a source of pride

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday praised Al Faisali's win of the second place in the Arab Cup Winners' Cup championship concluded in Amman Wednesday and paid tribute to hosts Al Wehdat and soccer fans who contributed to the success of the tournament.

His Majesty's greetings to Al Faisali Club's athletes and supporters were conveyed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, who paid a visit to the club's premises to offer congratulations over the win.

Al Faisali made Jordanian soccer history by becoming the first of the Kingdom's

teams to play for the title of this elite soccer tournament. It lost the final to Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh.

Hosts Al Wehdat were eliminated from the first round after receiving three defeats.

During the visit to Al Faisali, Prince Hassan, who attended Wednesday's final, conveyed the King's greetings to the Arab Soccer Federation and the participating teams.

"This championship was characterized by sportsmanship, which made me attend the match despite all my engagements," Prince Hassan told the championship's press committee.

Prince Hassan paid tribute to the Ministry of Youth, the Jordan Soccer Federation, Al Faisali and Al Wehdat teams and Minister of Youth Mohammad Daoudiyeh and congratulated olympic khreibkeh over their win of the trophy.

Commenting on Al Wehdat's decision to allow soccer fans into Amman International Stadium for free to support Al Faisali in the final, Prince Hassan said: "No doubt Al Faisali and Al Wehdat are in the same boat... It is a source of pride for us in our youth who are capable of competing at the Arab and international levels."

Sampras, Agassi yet tough draw at Roland Garros

PARIS (AFP) — Pete Sampras hopes of winning the only grand slam title missing from his collection were dealt a blow here on Thursday by Paris St. Germain footballer Sander Bravro.

The European Cup winners cup playmaker, invited to make the draw for the 1996 championships, brought gasps from the celebrity-packed Roland Garros audience by picking out highly-efficient Swede Magnus Gustafsson as Sampras' first-round opponent.

He then produced Spain's twice-champion Sergi Bruguera as probable second-round opposition.

The top-heavy first quarter

of the men's draw also included Todd Martin of the United States, former champion Mats Wilander of Sweden and Gilbert Schaller of Austria — the player who put Sampras out in the first round 12 months ago.

Sampras has played, and lost, only once — at the world team cup in Dusseldorf earlier this week — since the death of his coach and friend Tim Gullikson on May 3.

He will need to produce his very best tennis on the red clay surface if he is to reach a scheduled fourth-round clash against sixteen-seeded American Maliwai Washington.

Jim Courier, another twice-

champion, could be waiting for him in the quarter-finals.

Andre Agassi, scheduled to face Sampras in the semi-finals, will open his 1996 campaign against a qualifier — as will Agassi's potential quarter-final opponent Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia.

Austria's second-seed Thomas Muster, nursing a sprained ankle but hoping to be fit to defend his title, faces Frederik Fetterlein of Denmark in the first round, while fifth-seed Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia opens against Spaniard Jordi Arrese.

Muster's first seeded opponent should be Germany's Michael Stich, who opens against a qualifier. The

Austrian is then due to play Thomas Enqvist — provided the Swedish eighth-seed can put out Chile's promising 20-year-old ninth seed Marcelo Rios.

Rios, the left-handed 'south American Andre Agassi' who has shot up the rankings into the world's top-ten, opens against American Michael Joyce. He should then play Australian Jason Stoltenberg, who has drawn a first-round qualifier.

Michael Chang, the 1989 champion and a finalist last year, should be Goran Ivanisevic's quarter-final opponent — and that won't be to the fast-serving Croatian's liking. Ivanisevic refers to

Chang as 'the mosquito.'

Stefan Edberg and Henri Leconte, who are both playing at the championships for the last time, had differing fortunes. Edberg, 30 and the winner of six grand slam singles titles but never the French Open, has a first-round clash against Morocco's Karim Alami. Next up should be Carlos Moya of Spain — the player who ended Muster's clay-court winning streak in Munich this season. Leconte, a finalist in 1988, plays Sweden's Thomas Johansson in the first-round but can then expect Kafelnikov in the second.

No easy ride for Graf; Sawamatsu waits to ambush Seles

PARIS (AFP) — Joint world number-one and three-times champion Monica Seles, who has lost only one match at the French Open in four visits, will not be able to take anything for granted when she bids to win the second-leg of the Grand Slam.

The left-handed 22-year-old Australian Open champion is scheduled to play her first match against 168th-ranked French wildcard player Caroline Dhenin.

But in the second round she should face Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu — a player who thrives on the Roland Garros clay courts and who reached the fourth round in 1991 and the third round last year.

The 32nd-ranked Sawamatsu opens against Katarzyna Nowak of Poland.

Seles, who has spent most of the year nursing a sore left shoulder, withdrew from Friday's semifinals at the Spanish Open in Madrid as a precautionary measure (See separate story).

Seles, whose only defeat in four visits to Roland Garros came against Steffi

Graf in the 1989 semifinals, had to save five match points in her first match at the Spanish Open earlier this week before seeing off Austria's Barbara Schett.

Whether she can adapt quickly enough to Sawamatsu's telling clay-court patience remains to be seen.

If she does come safely through, Seles will probably have to negotiate a difficult fourth-round showdown against Bulgaria's 13th seed Magdalena Maleeva. Then her opponent should be either Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic or big-serving Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands.

In the semifinals Seles should find twice-champion and last year's finalist, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain, the other side of the net.

Sanchez-Vicario, who has not been in peak form recently but who is confident she will find her mark in Paris, has an opening match against Andrea Glass of Germany.

Big-hitting Mary Pierce, the 1994 finalist, is desperate to stem a slump in form which has seen her tumble out of the world's top-ten. She could not have asked for a kinder draw for she will face a qualifier in both the first and second rounds.

After that, things could get more difficult for Pierce would probably come up against American Jennifer Capriati, who returned to the tour in Essen earlier this year after an 18-month absence.

Capriati, the youngest-ever semifinalist at Roland Garros as a 14-year-old back in 1990, faces China's Jing-Qian Yi in the first round.

In the other half of the draw, defending champion Steffi Graf, will not be expecting an easy ride.

She opens against the experienced Larisa Neiland of Latvia before facing either Nicole Provis-Bradke of Australia or Jolene Watanabe of the United States.

Graf, who has recently been showing some signs of vulnerability, has a potentially explosive quarter-final against the ever-improving

Iva Majoli of Croatia.

Graf lost to Amanda Coetzer of South Africa in the Fed Cup, and then went out to Swiss teenager Martina Hingis in the semifinals of the Italian Open.

Majoli, who ended Mary Pierce's championship 12 months ago, plays Germany's Silke Meier in the first round.

Graf, 26, who has been under relentless pressure for over a year while her father and financial advisor Peter Graf has been held in a German prison on charges of tax evasion, is also scheduled to play Conchita Martinez in the semifinals.

Graf, who will be bidding for a fifth French Open crown, recently admitted that Martinez was the one player she would rather avoid.

Martinez, who has twice reached the semifinals, plays 71st-ranked Els Callens of Belgium in the first round and should not have too many problems before probably facing Japan's seventh-seeded Kimiko Date in the quarter-finals.

Date, a semifinalist here

Foschi wins 800m freestyle

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (R) — Jessica Foschi, the 15-year-old American swimming star will fighting to clear her name after testing positive for steroids last August, won the 800-metre freestyle at the Alamo challenge Thursday.

Foschi was competing in her first major meeting since the March 6-13 U.S. Olympic trials in Indianapolis where she missed making the Olympic team in the 800 by two places. She finished fourth but is already looking ahead four years to the next Olympics.

Foschi, the top-seeded 800 swimmer at this four-day international meeting, won in 8 minutes, 49.72 seconds — well off her 8:41.61 career-best clocked at the trials in March.

"It felt good to be back in the water," Foschi said. "I was a little tired at the end but it was a good swim for

me. It's nice just to think about my race."

Foschi tested positive for steroids at the U.S. National Championships in Pasadena, California last August.

As a result she first was banned for two years and then placed on a two-year probation before the American Arbitration Association ruled she was "improperly punished for a violation she never committed."

However, swimming's world governing body, FINA, is launching its own investigation and will hold a hearing in June in Lausanne, Switzerland. FINA still has the power to impose its own two-year ban or whatever punishment it deems necessary if it believes Foschi broke its rules.

Foschi and her coach Dave Ferris maintain she never took a banned substance and want her name cleared.

Rodman tattoo T-shirt causes uproar

NEW YORK (R) — Don't steal Dennis Rodman's tattoos.

That was the warning that a lawyer for the Chicago Bulls' star forward gave in a news release Thursday, the latest salvo in a courtroom and publicity battle over a T-shirt bearing "replications of ten tattoos on Mr. Rodman's upper body."

Rodman is the NBA's leading rebounder but is more famous for his ever-changing hair colours, his tattoos, his body piercings, his boss, his eye makeup and his run-ins with all forms of authority — not to mention his description of sex with

Madonna in his new best-selling book.

But some publicity he will not tolerate.

On May 7, Rodman obtained a court order in Newark, New Jersey, restraining Fanatix Apparel, Inc. of Teaneck, New Jersey, from manufacturing and selling the "Dennis Rodman tattoo T-shirt."

Thursday's news release from attorney Richard Howell said the shirt "offended" Rodman — especially "because Mr. Rodman's tattoos, particularly the one on his forearm depicting his daughter, Alexis, are specific and very personal."

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West accepts deal with Karadzic to avert risks

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The United States and its allies have made an arrangement that allows indicted Bosnian Serb leaders to remain in power, hidden from public view, because no one is willing to take the risk of arresting them, sources told AFP here Friday.

The arrangement was made at talks between U.S. and Western diplomats in Belgrade and in Pale in the past few days, the sources who asked not to be named said.

The U.S. assistant secretary of state-designate for Canadian and European affairs, John Kornblum, on Wednesday visited Belgrade and held talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Mr. Kornblum refused to reveal details of his talks but a spokesman for Carl Bildt, the top civilian official overseeing implementation of the Dayton peace treaty, told reporters in Sarajevo an "understanding" had been reached between Mr. Bildt, the Americans, Mr. Milosevic and Mr. Karadzic's close aide Momcilo Krajcinovic as late as Wednesday.

This "understanding" meant Karadzic would be "neither seen nor heard" in public, the spokesman, Colum Murphy, said.

In return sanctions would not, for the present, be imposed on Mr. Milosevic.

If Mr. Karadzic "were to

interfere with the process again, or sabotage the Dayton process, we would discuss sanctions and other things urgently with Mr. Milosevic," Mr. Murphy said, saying this meant Mr. Karadzic would be "effectively" out of power.

"We will watch events extremely carefully," Mr. Bildt said.

But NATO officials and other sources in Sarajevo noted that this did not mean Mr. Karadzic would be jailed or definitively out of power.

Speaking to the New York Times in Washington, a "senior U.S. official" said Thursday there was "absolutely no deal" on Mr. Karadzic.

Mr. Kornblum had told Mr. Milosevic "We want to see Karadzic gone and tried as a war criminal," said the unidentified official, who nevertheless failed to say by whom the arrest should be carried out.

"We have cut no deal that will cheat international justice and the law," Mr. Murphy told AFP Friday.

"There is an agreement or understanding," he said.

The essence of the understanding is that the West is not willing to arrest Mr. Karadzic or Raiko Mladic, the Serb's military leader, and wants Mr. Milosevic to carry it out. Since that will not happen, they have accepted their being formally sidelined, western officials

admitted Friday.

Mostar polls delayed

The European Union (EU) confirmed on Friday that Bosnia's first post-war polls, the municipal elections in the southern town of Mostar, would be delayed.

EU administrator of Mostar, Ricardo Perez Casado, told a press conference in Mostar that elections, organised by the EU, would take place in "the second half of June."

The elections had been scheduled for May 31, and the date was written into a footnote of the Dayton accords which ended the war in Bosnia last year. They are intended to help reunite Croats and Muslims in the town who fought 11 months of bitter clashes ending in 1994.

Mr. Perez Casado's announcement confirmed reports that the polls would be pushed back to allow time for six mainly Muslim parties, which had threatened a boycott, to take part.

A spokesman for Mr. Bildt said Thursday the polls would take place "some time in June" after Muslims and Croats came to an agreement that refugees from Mostar would be allowed to vote.

Mr. Perez Casado said that the basis of an agreement had been reached after "many meetings" with the parties involved.

Lauro hijack 'brains' expelled to Italy

GENOA, Italy (AP) — A Palestinian terrorist convicted for a role in the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship was extradited from Greece on Friday.

Abdullah Rahim Khaled, 60, was sentenced in absentia in 1986 in seven years and six months in prison in connection with the hijacking of the Genoa-based liner during a Mediterranean cruise.

An American tourist, Leon Klinghoffer, was killed during the hijacking.

Khaled was convicted of boarding the ship using a false Greek passport. He left the ship before it was commandeered.

After arriving from Greece, Khaled was escorted to Genoa police headquarters before transfer to prison, said a police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Khaled has been serving prison sentences in Greece since 1991 for drug smuggling, possessing false pas-

(Continued on page 7)



GETTING TREATED: Three-year-old gorilla Kijivu is treated by veterinarian Jeanette van der Wal (left) at the Monkey zoo de Apenheul in Apeldoorn in the Netherlands, on Friday after she was injured when playing on some ropes. Kijivu was injured on her left hand and lost the nail on her finger but was returned to her monkey island after treatment (Reuters photo)

Madadha welcomes Kuwaiti comments

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha in Friday welcomed a reported statement by Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah that diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Jordan were about to be returned to normal.

"If what is reported in the London-based daily Al Hayat Newspaper and quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, is true, this will be a development of deep satisfaction to Jordan," Mr. Madadha told the Jordan Times.

The report quoted Sheikh Sabah as saying that the Jordanian embassy in Kuwait would be opened very soon and a Jordanian official was due in Kuwait for this purpose.

"Contacts between the Jordanian and Kuwaiti governments over the restoration of relations have been going on for the past years and Kuwait has been saying that such a move would take time," Mr. Madadha said. "If the time has come for the move Jordan would no doubt be quite happy," he added.

But he said he knew of no

arrangements to despatch an official to Kuwait for the re-opening of the embassy there.

The Al Hayat report said that Sheikh Sabah had met with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti in Cairo and discussed bilateral relations and that Jordanian-Kuwaiti contacts were going on at all levels.

Al Hayat cited as signs of improved relations the restoration of telephone contacts between the two countries and the resumption of Jordanian exports to Kuwait.

U.S. general's remark sparks debate on Saudi leadership

DUBAI (R) — Talk of succession in Saudi Arabia revived after a U.S. general was quoted as saying that King Fahd might step down but diplomats and sources said he was only considering a foreign trip.

A Saudi source close to official thinking told Reuters the king, who suffered a stroke in November, was thinking of taking a holiday abroad.

"There is nothing definitive and His Majesty has not decided yet if he would go or not," said the source by telephone. "It has been on and off several times."

Diplomats in the kingdom said the leader of the world's largest oil exporter had been planning to take time off for holidays and treatment abroad but they had not heard of any definite plans to step down.

"The king's entourage has applied for Spanish visas several times but nothing happened," said a senior Arab diplomat in Riyadh. The king has a palace in Spain.

U.S. General Binford Peay, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Central Command, said in an interview that King Fahd, 74, would soon step aside in favour of Crown Prince Abdullah.

The slightly younger half-brother is also first deputy prime minister and commander of the 57,000-man National Guard.

"I think the general feeling is that King Fahd is going to go off to Spain or somewhere in Europe for a while and Prince Abdullah has the lead on running the country," Gen. Peay told Jane's Defence Weekly.

Gen. Peay's spokesman, Captain Mark Neuhart, said later that Gen. Peay was quoted correctly but did not say or mean to imply that he or the United States knew whether King Fahd might be planning to step aside and was not predicting he would do so.

Col. Neuhart said Gen. Peay was asked about the king's health and leadership of kingdom and simply commented that he had seen reports that King Fahd might be preparing to go away on vacation and that Prince Abdullah might be in charge of running the Kingdom in such an absence.

A Western diplomat in Riyadh said: "I heard of the Spanish visas but not on the king stepping down completely. Maybe taking some time off... but who knows what he is planning. It is anyone's guess."

A well-placed Gulf source said: "I heard the plan is for the king to go to Spain for rest, then to the United States or Switzerland for treatment."

Changes at the helm of Saudi Arabia, the oil-rich region's emerging military power, have an impact on world markets, especially oil prices which have reacted reports on the state of the king's health. The country exports about seven million barrels of its daily eight million barrel production and has reserves sufficient to last more than 100 years.

Diplomats and Gulf sources in the region say that if the king decided to take a holiday abroad, he was expected to hand the reins of power to Prince Abdullah, as in the past.

The crown prince is seen by some analysts as less open to the West but is not believed likely to change the kingdom's strategic alliances.

King Fahd has in recent weeks headed weekly Saudi cabinet meetings in his capacity as prime minister and has appeared on television animatedly chatting with officials.

Diplomats in the kingdom often stress that events within the large Saudi royal family were seldom widely known. "I don't think that many people can claim that they really know what is happening at the top in Saudi Arabia although one can sense that some changes are in the works," one diplomat said.

The King is known to suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure and a knee problem which he had planned to have treated in the United States. But the visit was put off several times over the past few years.

The King on Jan. 1 asked Prince Abdullah to run the affairs of state while he rested on doctors' orders.

He did not abdicate at the time and said he would return to power when his health improved. The king officially resumed his duties on Feb. 21.

Prince Abdullah remains their apparent and officials expect him to assume the throne if he outlives the King.

"Whatever happens the word is Abdullah is first in line to be king followed by (King Fahd's full brother and Defence Minister Prince) Sultan... and one should not expect any major changes in key Saudi policies," said one Arab diplomat.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Qatar to open sea links to Iraq — report

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar is to set up sea links with Iraq to help the passage of food and medicines to the country after Baghdad and the United Nations agreed an oil-for-food deal, a Qatari daily reported Friday. The Al Watan daily, which is close to the government, said an Iraqi delegation visiting Doha had studied with Qatari authorities ways of re-exporting goods from abroad to Iraqi ports. The delegation head, Yousef Al Rawi, told Al Watan "Qatari ports will take delivery of goods destined for Iraq and store them if the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr is saturated." He said the sea links between Qatar and Iraq would be launched once Baghdad had signed contracts with other countries and dependent on whether Iraqi ports were overflowing or not. Qatar and Oman are the only members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to have maintained good relations with Iraq.

Man linked to Lauro hijacking extradited

GENOA (AP) — A Palestinian convicted for a role in the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship was extradited from Greece on Friday. Abdul Rahim Khaled, 60, was sentenced in absentia in 1986 to seven years and six months in prison in connection with the hijacking of the Genoa-based liner during a Mediterranean cruise. An American tourist, Leon Klinghoffer, was killed during the hijacking. Khaled was convicted of boarding the ship using a false Greek passport. He left the ship before it was commandeered. After arriving from Greece, Khaled was escorted to Genoa police headquarters before transfer to prison, said a police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Khaled has been serving prison sentences in Greece since 1991 for drug smuggling, possessing false passports and attempted to break out of jail. Italy is also seeking the extradition from Spain of Yousef Majid Al Molqi, 33, convicted of shooting Klinghoffer and ordering his body pushed overboard. Al Molqi, who was serving a 30-year sentence in a Rome prison, escaped during a prison furlough in February and was captured three weeks later in Spain. Italian officials believe Molqi's extradition to Italy could take up to a year.

Indian beheaded in S. Arabia for murder

RIYADH (AFP) — An Indian was beheaded by sword in a public execution in Riyadh on Friday for murdering the wife of his Saudi employer, the Interior Ministry announced. Manickam Ramalingam, who was employed as a shepherd by a family in the region of Riyadh, was found guilty of murdering Badra Al Shibani, the wife of his employer, because of an argument. Ramalingam killed Shibani by hitting her on the head with a steel tool and wounding her husband, Farhan Al Shibani, while they were sleeping, the Interior Ministry said in a statement quoted by the official SPA news agency. The public execution is the first in Saudi Arabia since March 15 and the second so far this year. In 1995, the number of people beheaded in Saudi Arabia reached a record 186, according to figures compiled by AFP.

Humidity disrupts traffic at Beirut airport

BEIRUT (AFP) — Poor visibility caused by fog and high levels of humidity disrupted traffic at Beirut airport for several hours, airport officials said Friday. Two planes, a Gulf Air and Lebanon's national carrier MEA, were unable to land on Thursday night and had to be diverted to Larnaca on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. "It was the first time in many years that we experience such a high level of humidity. It reached almost 100 per cent," a spokesman for the meteorological office at Beirut airport said. Normal traffic resumed overnight.

Israeli role claimed in freeing Indonesia hostages

HONG KONG (AP) — Israeli-made pilotless planes using body-beat detectors helped Indonesian forces pinpoint the nine hostages they rescued from rebels in Irian Jaya, the Far Eastern Economic Review said Thursday. Three Israeli technical advisers accompanied the drones, which were shipped from Singapore aboard a Singaporean air force C-130 cargo plane, the Hong Kong-based weekly said. The drones flew over rebel-held jungle in the far east of Indonesia, using thermal imaging to detect body heat in dense foliage that had frustrated previous searches, it said. The nine British, Dutch and Indonesian conservationists, held for four months, were freed by Indonesian special forces on May 15. Two other Indonesian hostages were killed in the clash with their captors. The review said the Israeli role "raises some sensitive issues" in predominantly Muslim Indonesia. It said that although president Suharto's two meetings with Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's late prime minister, led to a perceived thaw in relations, "any hint of military cooperation between the two countries remains delicate."

Qadhafi in Egypt, meets Mubarak in Cairo today

SALLOUM, Egypt (Agencies) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi arrived Friday to a festive greeting by thousands of people at the Egyptian border before a meeting with President Hosni Mubarak.

It will be Qadhafi's second meeting this year with Mr. Mubarak, who has tried to end Libya's isolation brought on by U.N. sanctions.

Wearing a gown and turban Col. Qadhafi was greeted by thousands of cheering people who had waited hours for him at Salloom, a town near the border. The Libyan leader must drive to Egypt because of a four-year-old U.N. ban on air travel in or out of Libya.

Egyptian officials said Col. Qadhafi would also hear poems and speeches during a meeting with the Awlad Ali, a tribe from the western Sahara which traces its roots to both Egypt and Libya. Such meetings are common during visits by Col. Qadhafi, who touts his desert roots and fashions himself as a man of the people.

Col. Qadhafi was to spend the night in the Mediterranean port of Marsa Matruh, 200 kilometres from the Libyan border, then depart for Cairo on Saturday to meet Mr. Mubarak.

Egyptian officials said the two would discuss the U.N. sanctions imposed to force Libya to turn over two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet over Scotland that killed 270 people.

Among other topics will be reports that Col. Qadhafi plans to expel all 300,000 Palestinians in Libya, ostensibly to facilitate their return

to Palestinian territories. Last year, he threw out more than 2,000 Palestinians, many living in Libya for decades, to protect the Israeli-Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreements.

Libyan-U.S. relations have again been strained over U.S. accusations that Libya was developing a chemical weapons plant.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat meanwhile criticised Col. Qadhafi for planning to expel more Palestinians, saying he was mistaken.

The "Libyan authorities are preparing transit camps near the Egyptian border for thousands of Palestinians spared deportation last year when Col. Qadhafi suspended a decision to expel them."

The Palestinian National Authority and many international organisations protested against the deportations, rejecting the Libyan argument that it wanted to show the shortcomings of the Palestinian self-rule agreements with Israel.

In an interview published in the Egyptian government newspaper Al Abran on Thursday, Mr. Arafat said: "I prefer not to talk about this (Libya's plan) because it is mistaken thinking."

"Palestinians should go home (to Palestine) but they shouldn't be expelled from Arab countries... What my brother Muammar Qadhafi is doing is expelling the Palestinians and they shouldn't be expelled because they have helped build Libya."

Najibullah remains an embarrassment for U.N.

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Former Afghan leader Najibullah, now in his fifth year as a refugee confined to U.N. housing in Kabul, is a living reminder of the world body's failure in Afghanistan, analysts and diplomats say. He is also a potential threat to Mujahedeen leaders, they add.

"He is like a nail in the shoe of the U.N.," a Western diplomat said, adding that the former communist president's presence in Kabul was a constant embarrassment for the United Nations.

"It's a question of credibility. What credibility would the U.N. have in the future to convince other heads of state to resign and leave?" asked one U.N. official. In early 1992, Benon Sevan, former chief of the U.N.

mission in Afghanistan, convinced Mr. Najibullah to stand down as his authority crumbled amid rapid Mujahedeen victories all over Afghanistan.

Many of Mr. Najibullah's own supporters defected. In exchange for his resignation, Mr. Sevan promised the United Nations would guarantee Mr. Najibullah's security and safe exit from Afghanistan.

But on April 16, the former communist chief who ruled Afghanistan for five years with an iron hand was arrested by his own soldiers on the road to the airport. He had to take refuge in the U.N. compound in Kabul.

Since then, U.N. attempts to get him out of Afghanistan have been in vain. And Mr. Najibullah, who had predicted several

times that chaos would follow his departure, has become the most cumbersome refugee in the world.

The 49-year-old lives behind high concrete walls under the guard of the feared Khad secret police, which he himself headed in the past. But he is in good shape, intellectually and physically.

"He is the most clever man I have ever met," a U.N. official said.

Mr. Najibullah, who lives with his aide-de-camp, General Jaspur, and former cabinet chief, Eshaq Tokhi, reads a lot, exercises daily and is said to pray regularly.

Sometimes Mujahedeen leaders visit him and listen to his analyses, reputed to be the brightest, on the situation in Afghanistan. They include Ahmad Shah Masoud, an anti-Soviet

war hero, and military strongman to the disputed regime of President Burhanuddin Rabbani in Kabul.

Those who have access to Mr. Najibullah say that his charisma has remained intact through the years. "When he starts speaking, everybody becomes silent and listens to him," an Afghan official said.

An exceptional orator, coming from a good family of the main Pushtun tribe, the Ahmadzai, Mr. Najibullah could become a potential rival for the Mujahedeen and a leader for the traditionally divided Pushtun tribes of the south.

"If there was a free and fair election tomorrow, Mr. Najibullah could win," said one Afghan intellectual. In Kabul's hazards where mujahedeen

leaders are openly criticised for the fighting, many people regret the time of "Najib."

Confronted with the cruelty of the civil war, which has left 25,000 dead in Kabul alone, Kabulis tend to forget Mr. Najibullah's reputation for torture when he headed the Khad. They just remember there were fewer rockets hitting Kabul then. Still, many Afghans would rather see Mr. Najibullah dead than alive.

"He knows where all the bodies are buried," an Afghan official said.

There are strong rumours that the former president has started writing his memoirs. If smuggled out of Kabul, they will be a "hombshell," a diplomat remarked.

COLUMN

Expensive meal for Nigerian bull

LAGOS (R) — A Nigerian bull that ate 103,400 naira (\$1,216) was slaughtered by villagers only to find the notes were destroyed, the national news agency reported. The News Agency of Nigeria said cattle dealer Saidu Dan Allau stashed the proceeds of a sale in 20 naira bills in the can he used as a feeding trough for his animals. When he discovered the bull had eaten the money villagers advised Mr. Allau to slaughter the beast, and when he refused they bought it from him and killed it themselves. "The money had been thoroughly ground up and tucked away in the animal's stomach. They removed the mutilated money and shared the meat accordingly," the agency said.

British scientists find 'weird' new fossil

LONDON (R) — British scientists said they had dug up the fossil of a strange creature that lived 450 million years ago and had never been seen before by humans. The creature, nicknamed "Sue" while they try to classify it, lived in cold, shallow seas in what is now South Africa. "It's very weird," said Richard Aldridge, a palaeontologist at Leicester University who led the expedition. "It's got a lot of characteristics like arthropods. It might be a distant relation of prawns or something like that. But it also looks wormlike."

Injured iguana? Call the governor

CASTINE, Maine (R) — Governor Angus King knew he would face a range of constituent demands when he took office, but increasing iguana access to medical services was not one of them. Mr. King said his office received an angry call from a man who complained his pet iguana had bitten its tongue. The man said no veterinarians were willing to treat it and demanded to know: "What's the governor going to do about it?"

Man claims missing fingers after 25 years

SYDNEY (R) — An eight-fingered Sydney man has been reunited with his two wayward digits 25 years after losing them in an accident with a circular saw, police said. The two mummified fingers — one with a nail described by police as nicely manicured — were found in a pile of wallpaper by workers demolishing a house in Sydney, detective Sergeant John Pendergast said. Suspecting the workers had stumbled on to evidence of a gruesome crime, police cordoned off the house but a search failed to uncover other human remains, he said. Finally, an eight-fingered 59-year-old Sydney man who had lived in the house from 1968 to 1988 claimed the fingers after hearing reports of the mystery. "He understood they had been thrown out as rubbish," Sgt. Pendergast said.

Queen comes unstuck in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (R) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth will vanish from Hong Kong postage stamps early next year as symbols of British rule fade away before the colony reverts to China. The queen's portrait will be replaced by an image of the colony's Victoria Harbour, a government statement said.